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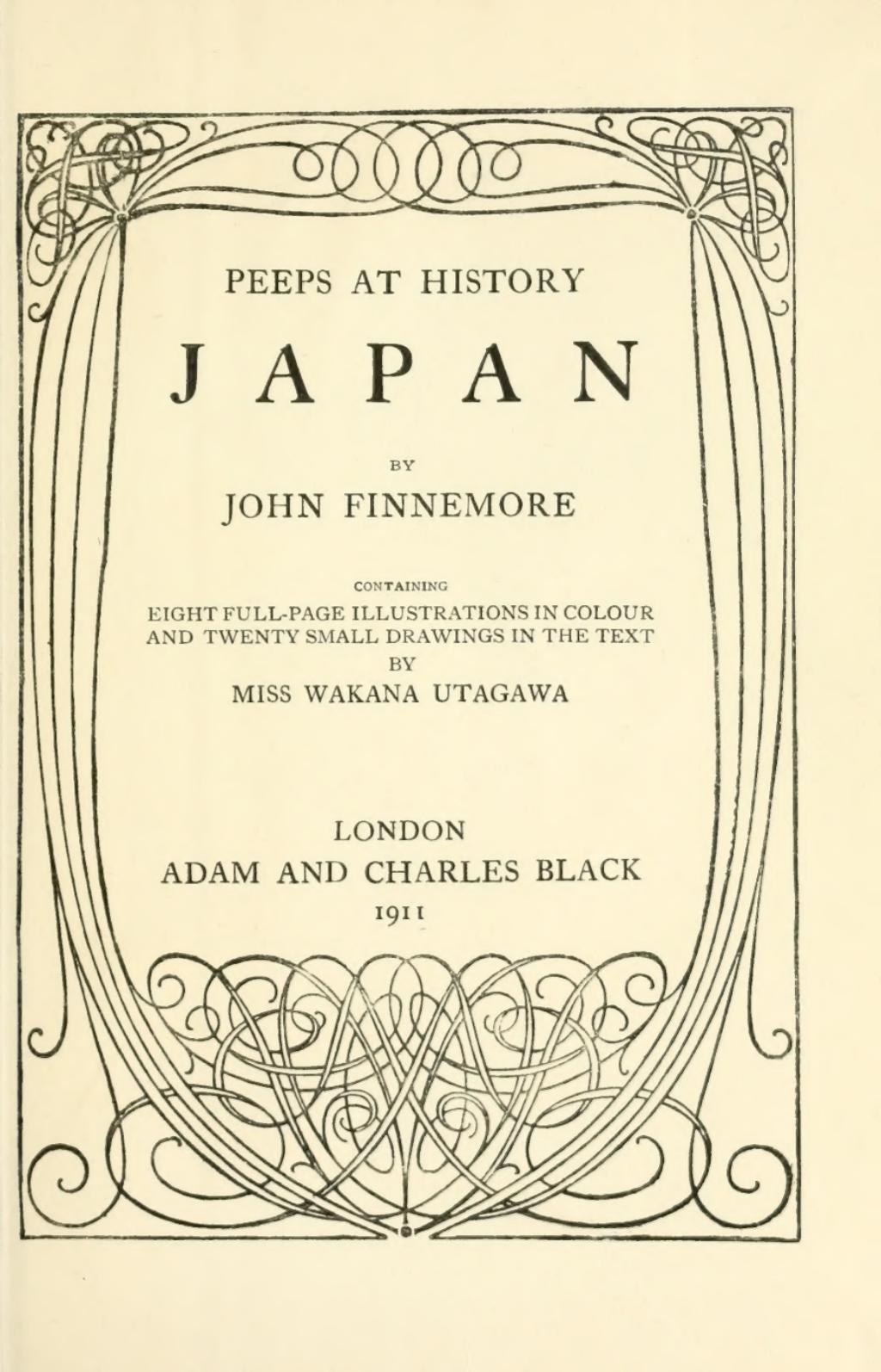
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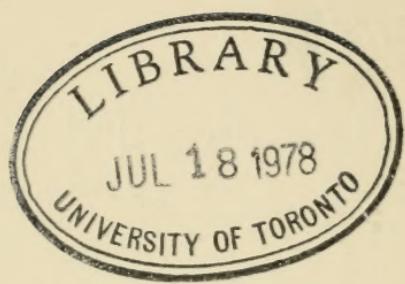
A WARRIOR OF THE ASHIKAGA PERIOD. page 51



PEEPS AT HISTORY
J A P A N
BY
JOHN FINNEMORE

CONTAINING
EIGHT FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS IN COLOUR
AND TWENTY SMALL DRAWINGS IN THE TEXT
BY
MISS WAKANA UTAGAWA

LONDON
ADAM AND CHARLES BLACK
1911



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BY MISS WAKANA UTAGAWA

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PERIODS OF JAPANESE HISTORY

I. THE LEGENDARY EMPERORS

Names and dates are here uncertain. The period probably ranges from 660 B.C. to A.D. 645: It is supposed that the Empire was founded by Prince Jimmu Tenno about 660 B.C.

II. THE PUPPET EMPERORS

This period ranges from A.D. 645 to A.D. 1186. During this time up to A.D. 1050 the Fujiwara family were in a position of great authority, and exercised the powers of government. After them the Taira family rose to prominence. The Taira were crushed by the Minamoto, whose chief Yoritomo became Shogun, or acting Emperor, in 1186.

III. MIKADO AND SHOGUN (OR TYCOON)

This period lasted from A.D. 1186 to A.D. 1868. The Mikado was always the Emperor, but the Shogun governed on his behalf. The Shogunate was usually held by the chief of a great family.

Dynasty of Minamoto Shoguns, 1186-1219.

Dynasty of Shadow Shoguns, 1220-1334 (so called because the power was in the hands of the Hojo family, whose chiefs were called Regents).

Dynasty of Ashikaga Shoguns, 1334-1573.

Dynasty of Usurping Shoguns, 1573-1603.

Dynasty of Tokugawa Shoguns, 1603-1868.

IV. THE MODERN EMPERORS, A.D. 1868 TO PRESENT DAY

The Emperor regains his ancient power, and the Shogunate is abolished.

J A P A N

CHAPTER I

EARLY JAPAN

MORE than six hundred years ago, a great traveller returned to Europe and told the world of the wonders he had seen when journeying in the Far East. This was the famous Marco Polo, the Venetian, who had travelled through China in the year 1295. He tells us that when he was in China he heard of "Chipangue, an island towards the east, in the high seas, 1500 miles from the Continent ; and a very great island it is. The people are white, civilised, and well favoured. They are idolaters, and are dependent on nobody. And I can tell you the quantity of gold they have is endless ; for they find it in their own islands." Here we have the first news which Europe heard of Japan, for Chipangue was the Chinese name for the island empire, and Japan is a shortened form of the word.

But the history of Japan was many centuries old when Marco Polo heard of the country, and the early story of the land is hidden in a mist of legend and myth. It was about the end of the seventh century when their earliest records were made by order of the Emperor Temmu, and in this, the oldest Japanese history, the traditions of a thousand years are set down.

Japan

These early legends trace the origin of the line of emperors to a divinity called the Sun Goddess, and from her race sprang the famous Jimmu, the first Emperor of Japan. It is said that he began to reign about 660 b.c. The legends are full of stories of Jimmu's great exploits, of the manner in which he overran the land, and conquered the barbarians whom he found there. There can be no doubt that these stories of Jimmu refer to a time when a great movement of new tribes into Japan took place.

It is believed by scholars that there were two great migrations from the mainland of Asia into Japan, and that the new-comers crossed into the islands from the peninsula of Korea. These invaders found the land in the possession of fierce savage tribes, whom they attacked and drove from the fertile plains of the main island to the wilder parts in the north, where many of them are found to this day. These people are the famous hairy race of the Ainos, a people still very savage in their ways, though in temper they are now mild and inoffensive. They are remarkable for the great quantity of hair which grows upon their faces and bodies, giving them a wild, unkempt look.

They still remain quite distinct from their Japanese neighbours, and are savages pure and simple. They live by hunting and fishing. They hunt with bow and arrows, and they fish with the same rude tackle which their ancestors used long ages ago. They have no written language, and seem incapable of drawing the signs which are often used among the rudest savages to convey ideas to others. The simplest articles which require manufacture they obtain from the Japanese by offering skins or fish in exchange for the goods. They worship such objects as rivers, rocks, and fountains. They bury their dead in secret places, and will

Early Japan

not show such spots to any one. It is not certain whence the name Aino comes. The Japanese believe that it springs from the word *inu*, meaning a dog, and is a term of scorn.

Among these hairy people the bear is an animal held in great regard. It is impossible to discover whether this arises from the bear having been an object of worship in other days, but the bear festival is the chief event in their year. In every Aino village the hunters go up to the mountains in spring and bring back a live young bear cub. They hand this over to a woman who nurses and feeds it. When it gets too old to be left loose, it is shut up in a strong cage, and there kept until the autumn of the year after its capture.

Now comes the time of the great bear festival, and all is excitement in the Aino village. The hunters gather about the cage armed with knives and spears, with clubs, bows and arrows. The bear has been kept without food for some time and is raging with hunger. This angry mood they heighten by a score of teasing tricks which reduce the bear to a state of fury, then, upon a given signal, the door of the cage is flung open. The bear rushes out and charges upon his tormentors. The latter dash to meet him with equal fury, and assail him with their weapons. A wild struggle follows, and the bear falls under a shower of blows and stabs. The body is cut up, and each family receives a piece, upon which they feast with great delight. If you ask an Aino what this bear feast means he cannot tell you. It is a custom which goes back beyond memory or tradition, and it is the great day of their year.

When the Japanese first settled in the islands they had not only to fight with the Ainos, but with a race which was even older still. These were the people who were called pit-dwellers. Mention of them is

Japan

found in the earliest Japanese records, and they gained their name because they built no houses but lived in holes in the ground. They dug out pits and covered them with branches, and in these pits they lived. The Ainos called them "Hole-Men"; the Japanese spoke of them as "the Dwarfs," for they were a tiny people.

There is a story that when Prince Jimmu was conquering the country he came to a land which was inhabited by earth-spiders; these earth-spiders were the pit-dwellers. He made a feast for eighty warriors of the tribe in one of their pits, and to each warrior he assigned one of his soldiers as attendant, and every soldier had his sword girded at his side. Jimmu posted himself outside the cave and sang a song, and the soldiers waited for a certain line. This line was a signal, and when Jimmu sang it every man drew his sword and slew the earth-spider upon whom he was attending.

From the time of the great conqueror Jimmu there is a regular list of emperors whose names have been preserved in tradition, but no great reliance can be placed upon the dates at which they are said to have ascended the throne. It is noteworthy that for each emperor a new palace was built. This was done because it was the custom to abandon a house in which a man had died, and, above all, the place in which an emperor had passed away. The ancient Japanese looked upon such a house as unclean and not fit for further use.

One funeral custom of the ancient Japanese was of dreadful cruelty. When a great man died, the retainers who had served him and the horses which had carried him were buried at the same time as their master. This custom was unbroken until the time of the eleventh emperor, Suinin, a humane and kind-hearted man. It happened that his younger brother died

Early Japan

(2 B.C.), and in a great ring round the royal corpse were buried the bodies of his living retainers. These unhappy men were placed upright, with their heads above the ground, and there left to die of hunger. The cries of these poor starving wretches went to the heart of the Emperor, and he made up his mind that this dreadful custom should cease. One of his advisers now brought forward a plan which pleased the Emperor greatly. The counsellor proposed that figures should be made of clay and be set up in a circle about the burial-place, instead of human beings. This was done, but it is certain that the old cruel practice did not die out at once, for as late as A.D. 646 we find an emperor issuing a command that living retainers should not be buried with their masters.

It is of this humane Emperor Suinin that the story of a great conspiracy is told. His wife had a brother who wished to rule in the place of Suinin. This brother came to the Empress and said, "Which is dearer to you, your brother or your husband?" She said, "My brother is the dearer." Then he replied, "If I am the dearer to you, we two will rule the empire. See, here is a sharp dagger; take this and slay the Emperor in his sleep." She took the dagger, and one day, when the Emperor was sleeping with his head in her lap, she raised it to strike him. But at the last moment her courage failed her, and she burst into tears, and the tears fell on the face of her sleeping husband. Up started the Emperor and cried out to her, "I have had a most strange dream. I dreamt that a storm-cloud drew over the sky and that heavy rain fell and wetted my face. And a tiny crimson snake curled itself around my neck. What can so strange a dream mean?" The Empress could contain herself no longer, and told him all that had been planned against him.

Japan

The Emperor gathered a strong body of troops and went to seize his brother-in-law. The latter had posted himself and his men behind a strong stockade and prepared to resist Suinin's attack. With him was his sister, for the Empress had fled from her husband to her brother. When the Emperor's troops drew near, the Empress came to the stockade holding out her new-born son and begging the Emperor to take it under his care, though for herself she meant to stay with her brother. The Emperor now resolved to rescue both the child and his mother. He picked out a band of his best and most cunning warriors and sent them to fetch the child, saying to them, "See to it that you seize the mother also."

But the Empress feared that the soldiers would try to carry her off, so she made preparations to deceive them. She shaved off her hair, yet fastened on the loose hair so that it seemed to grow on her head. She wore strings on her neck and arms to which her jewels were attached, and these strings she made rotten; her garments she made tender by soaking them in wine.

The warriors came. She handed them the child and fled. They sprang forward and seized her by the hair: it came loose in their hands. They snatched at her jewel-strings: they broke. They clutched at her garments, and the tender garments gave way and the Empress was free, and fled. Then the warriors went back to the Emperor, taking with them the child but not the mother. Suinin was very angry, and gave orders at once that the jewellers who had made the rotten jewel-strings should be punished.

By this time the stockade around the rebel's palace was on fire. The Emperor went up to the burning rampart and called to his wife through the flames, "A child's name must be given by its mother. What

Early Japan

shall be the name of this child ? ” And the Empress answered and gave him a name. “ How shall he be reared ? ” was the next question. “ Find for him a foster-mother and a bathing-woman,” replied the Empress ; “ they shall rear him.” “ You have tied upon him a small jewel : how shall it be loosened ? ” The Empress said how this was to be done. Then the Emperor stayed no longer, but urged his soldiers to the assault. The rebel was slain in his burning palace, and the Empress perished with her brother.

CHAPTER II

EARLY JAPAN (*continued*)

THE Emperor Suinin was followed on the throne by his son Keiko, and Keiko is remembered chiefly as the father of a famous son, Prince Yamato-dake, whose name is great in Japanese legend. The career of this prince is pictured as most daring and romantic, and even as a youth he is shown as doing wild and wonderful deeds. The first story told of him shows him as a cool, ferocious character. His father said to him one day, “ Your elder brother does not come to the banquets in the palace. Why is this ? It will be your task to speak to him and teach him his duty.” A few days passed, and again the Emperor said, “ Still your brother does not attend to his duty. Have you given him a warning as I bade you ? ” “ I have given him a warning,” answered the young prince calmly. “ In what manner did you give him a warning ? ” “ I slew him and flung his body away,” was the cool answer.

The Emperor was horrified at this dreadful reply, and began to feel uneasy before this terrible son, so

Japan

he set him a task which would fully employ his powers. In a distant province lived two brothers, savage bandits, who laughed at the Emperor's authority, and robbed and murdered his subjects. He ordered his son to go and subdue them. "I will go," said the prince. First of all he went to his aunt and borrowed from her a female dress, and in the bosom of this dress he hid a sharp sword. Next he journeyed to the province where these wild outlaws lived. He reached their hiding-place and found that they were about to take up their dwelling in a new cave which they had dug out of the rock. To celebrate the day they had invited many of their neighbours to a feast, both men and women. The prince was young and very fresh-looking, and he put on his woman's dress and let down his long hair, which had been bound about his head. He went into the cave, and the robbers were delighted to see this beautiful stranger, and gave the supposed maiden the chief place at the feast, seating the new-comer between themselves and offering fruit and wine.

At a moment when the merriment was at its height and the robbers were off their guard, the prince whipped out his sword and cut down the elder brother with a single blow. The younger leapt from his seat and darted for the door of the cave: the prince pursued him and caught him at the door. He seized the robber with one hand and with the other drove his sword through the outlaw's body. "Stay for a moment," cried the robber as he fell, "and draw not thy sword from the wound." And the prince stayed his hand. "Who art thou?" asked the wounded man, "and whence dost thou come?" The prince told him.

Then the outlaw said, "There were none in the west so brave as we two brothers. From this time it

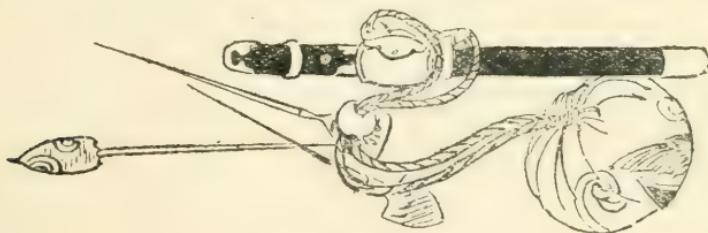


AINOS OF THE PRESENT DAY, PAGE 10

Early Japan

shall be thy praise to be called Yamato-dake (the bravest in Yamato)." These were his last words, for upon the next instant the prince "ripped him up like a ripe melon."

Many other stories deal with the prince's encounters with the Ainos, and to these stories there is, without doubt, a basis of truth. For many centuries after their settlement on the islands the Japanese waged



Tanken (short sword)

fierce war with the former inhabitants, and the Ainos fought hard in defence of their freedom.

The last expedition of Yamato-dake's short life was against some wild tribes which he wished to bring under the rule of his father. Before he set out he went to the temple of the Sun goddess, who was considered to be his great ancestress, and worshipped there. He sought once more the counsel of his aunt, who was the priestess of the temple, and she gave him a magic sword and a bag which he was not to open unless he found himself in a position of great danger.

On his journey he met with a chief who laid a plan to destroy Yamato-dake. The chief told the prince that in the midst of a wide moor there was a lagoon where lived a wonderful deity. The prince at once went over the moor to find the lagoon. But the moor was covered with long dry grass, and when Yamato-dake was in the midst of the grass the chief set fire to it, hoping to see the hero consumed. The prince

Japan

saw that he was in great danger, and opened the bag. In it he found the means of making fire, and at once he cleared a space with his magic sword, heaped up the grass and set fire to it. Thus fire fought fire, and he was safe in the open space which his own fire made. As soon as he escaped from the moor, he sought out the cunning chief and slew him and conquered all that region.

He journeyed on and entered a boat to cross a wide arm of the sea. And a storm arose and the waves became rough, and it seemed as if the boat would be swallowed up in the angry sea and all must be drowned. Now his wife was with him in the boat, and she rose up and cast mats into the sea, saying, "I will enter the sea instead of the prince : you must finish the task on which you are sent." Then she sprang from the boat and sat down on the mats. The sacrifice was accepted. As she sank, the waves sank also, and soon the boat was sailing over a quiet sea. The princess was never seen again, but her comb was washed ashore, and over it the people built a sacred temple in her honour.

After meeting with many adventures and overcoming many tribes, the prince turned his steps homewards. But on the way he was stricken with a mortal illness, and died in the thirty-second year of his age. His followers buried him in the place where he died and built a splendid tomb over his body. And all the nation mourned for the noble leader whom they had lost.

The next great event of Japanese history is the invasion of Korea, an incident of which many tales are told and many scenes have been painted. It stands out in the history of Japan something like the Norman invasion in the history of England, for the results were very similar. Just as the Normans brought new ideas and new modes of life into England, so the

Early Japan

Japanese gained many fruits from the conquest of Korea. The attack upon Korea was carried out by a famous empress whose husband had just died. She concealed the fact of his death, and, aided by a faithful Prime Minister, she gathered troops and fitted out a fleet to sail to the mainland. In A.D. 202 she crossed the straits and attacked the peninsula. So powerful was her army, and so complete the surprise to the Koreans, that she overran the land with ease.

Now the importance of this conquest did not lie in the fact that tribute was paid to Japan : it lay in the fact that Korea became an open door through which the influence of the mainland flowed into the island empire. Korea was at that time a home of Chinese learning and civilisation, and when Korean ambassadors came with tribute they brought new ideas and new culture in their train. Thus, in the year A.D. 284 the ambassador from one of the tribute kingdoms was a famous Chinese scholar. He became tutor to the young prince who was afterwards the noted Emperor Nintoku, and gave him lessons in the Chinese language and literature. The arts of writing and printing were now introduced into Japan, for we must remember that the Chinese were familiar with printed books for many ages before printing was known in Europe.

The young scholar Nintoku became Emperor in A.D. 313, and he is known in history as the Sage Emperor. He was not only wise but very good to his people. He looked into the state of his kingdom for himself, and found that many of his people were very poor and were borne down by the weight of taxes collected from them by the Government. He gave orders that for a term of years no taxes whatever should be gathered. This order was strictly obeyed, for through all ages the Japanese have given a blind

Japan

obedience to the commands of their emperors, holding them to be the decrees of Heaven.

The farmers, relieved of their burdens, grew prosperous, and were happy and contented. But now that taxes were no longer paid, there was nothing to support either the Emperor or his Court. The palace grew shabby, and the rain ran through holes in the roof. The Emperor himself was forced to go about in mean and rough clothing. His subjects did not like this, and they came to him and begged to be allowed to pay such taxes as would furnish all he needed. But Nintoku would not allow them to do this. He had fixed a term of years during which they might recover from their poverty, and that time must pass. And when the time had gone he went up to a high place and looked over the land. He saw the snug houses with the hearth-fire sending up its curling wreaths of smoke, he saw the fertile fields around the homesteads, and he rejoiced at the pleasant sight. Now he issued commands that the taxes should be paid once more, and people paid them gladly and hailed him as Nintoku, the Sage Emperor.

In Japanese history Nintoku occupies much the same place as our own Alfred the Great takes in English history. Like Alfred, Nintoku was not only good, but wise, and loved learning. Now that the art of writing was known, he sent scribes into the distant provinces with orders to set down on record all important events and forward their accounts to the Court. Thus we now reach a time when fables and legends begin to disappear from Japanese history. The writers of later times had these records upon which to draw, and from the time of the Sage Emperor dates and statements begin to wear the sober guise of truth, instead of being decked in the fantastic colours of myth and legend.

Life among the Early Japanese

CHAPTER III

LIFE AMONG THE EARLY JAPANESE

WHAT manner of life did the people live who dwelt in the island empire in those far-off days ? There are, of course, no written records of their daily life, but there are many unwritten records, and scholars have been able to glean from these, numbers of facts which throw much light upon the ways of Old Japan. These unwritten records are of two kinds. First, there are the actual remains left by the old inhabitants ; and, secondly, there are the incidents of daily life mentioned in the legends.

Among the most important remains are the shell-heaps where the people threw the refuse of their daily food and the rubbish from their houses. Fish and shell-fish have always been most important articles of food in Japan, and here and there are still to be found mounds where the shells had been flung after their contents had been eaten. On to this rubbish-heap also went all kinds of broken and useless odds and ends, pottery, weapons, implements, things that had served their turn in the household and were no longer of service. Covered up in the refuse, they were thus preserved for many ages, and the rubbish of two or three thousand years ago is now a priceless treasure in the eyes of the scholar who wishes to know what those old tribes used and how they lived.

Among the Japanese proper the early government was of the tribal order. The first emperor was the chief of the tribe which seized the land, and the nobles were his more important followers. Among all early peoples we may notice a tendency to regard their chiefs and heroes as being of divine origin, and

Japan

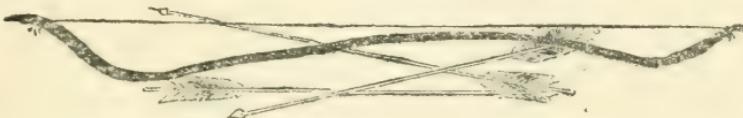
among the Japanese this feeling was very strong and its influence extends to the present day. They looked upon the race of emperors as springing from their chief deity, the Sun Goddess, and so their ruler was known as the "Son of Heaven," and his edicts were considered to possess divine authority, and to them they were bound to pay blind obedience.

The early religion consisted in the worship of a number of mythical gods and goddesses who were supposed to have been the founders of the Japanese race; and the worship also of objects of nature. This is the Shinto religion, whose temples and priests are still to be found in Japan, and among these temples those dedicated to the Sun Goddess are by far the most highly regarded. The word Shinto means "the way of the gods." The form of Shinto worship is very ancient, and goes back to times far beyond written history. Its ritual was handed down orally from generation to generation of priests, and thus mention is preserved of many things pertaining to the life of Old Japan. The Five Grains are often mentioned, and these were rice, millet, barley, and two kinds of beans. With regard to dress, mention is made of "bright cloth, soft cloth, and coarse cloth." As the silkworm and the mulberry are spoken of, it is probable that the finer cloths were of silk, and the coarser of the bark of the paper mulberry-tree or of hemp. In early days the bark of the mulberry-tree, now used for making paper, was twisted into a thread from which stout cloth was woven. To-day cotton is the universal wear in Japan, but not a word of it is found in old accounts, and it is said that it was not introduced until about A.D. 800, when it came from India.

Clothes in ancient days were of considerable variety, for one of the legends speaks of a deity who, about to

Life among the Early Japanese

bathe in a stream, threw down his girdle, skirt, upper garment, trousers, and hat. He wore bracelets and a necklace, and the old stories make much mention of jewellery. Jewels have been found in the ancient burial-places, and show that stones were threaded on strings to form bracelets and necklets, and rings of copper and bronze, plated with gold or silver, were much used. The burial images of clay show how these



Yumiya (bow and arrows)

ornaments were worn, and the rings were placed in the ears and not on the fingers.

The people of Old Japan were hunters and farmers and fishermen. They hunted the deer, the hare, the bear, and the boar: they shot their game with bows and arrows, or transfix them with spears. In farming they cultivated the Five Grains, but no mention is made of tea, now so widely grown. There is no word of potatoes, and, according to tradition, oranges were introduced in the first century after Christ.

Among domestic animals it is strange that the cow is never spoken of in the old legends. The horse is mentioned again and again, though always for riding and never for driving, but there is no word of the cow or of milk, cheese, or butter. We hear of dogs but not of cats, and the barnyard fowl was well known from earliest times.

At the day of which we speak the Japanese ate much more flesh-food than they did at a later period: the change in their habits was brought about by a religious influence which will be dealt with later. But on the score of drink they have been faithful through all the ages to the national beverage of *saké*,

Japan

a kind of beer made from rice. In the most ancient stories the gods are pictured as drinking *saké*, and jars of *saké* are spoken of as among the favourite offerings to be made to deities. Every one in Old Japan drank *saké*, from the emperor to the husbandman, and it is still the favourite drink in modern days.

When the warriors marched against a foe they carried spears, bows and arrows, and swords. The earliest forms of spear and arrow-heads are of flint, and these possibly are remains of Ainos and cave-dwellers. The Japanese knew something of the use of metals, for they had swords and daggers and fish-hooks made of metal, though it is believed that they cut down the trees for building with axes of stone. When they went to war or started on an expedition the Old Japanese tried to find out the will of the gods by divination. The oldest way of doing this was by using the shoulder-blade of a deer. Every morsel of flesh was carefully scraped away from the bone, and then it was held over a fire which had to be built of cherry-wood. The heat of the fire caused the bone to crack, and the will of the gods was read from the form and direction of the cracks. In later days the shell of a tortoise was used in place of the shoulder-blade.

When battle was formed the Japanese always manœuvred to get the sun at their backs, its rays striking over their shoulders into the faces of their enemies. In this manner they believed that they received the support of the Sun Goddess, their greatest deity. A striking instance of this belief is shown in the story of a battle fought by the brother of the famous Jimmu. He was leading a body of invaders against a native tribe, when he was struck by an arrow from the bow of the opposing chief. The Japanese prince was facing the sun, and he cried out,



THE EMPEROR NINTOKU, FIG. 20



The Teachings of China

“It is not right for me, an august child of the Sun Goddess, to fight facing the sun. It is for this reason that I am struck by the wretched villain’s hateful hand.” But the wound was mortal, and in a few days he died.

The workers of those ancient days were formed into guilds, and over each guild was set a captain. There were the guilds of potters, who made earthen cups and bowls ; the guild of clay image workers, who formed the images for use at burials ; the guild of butlers ; guild of watchmen ; and so on. As far as is known, there were no money payments made for any service. Coin seems to have been unused. The husbandman paid his taxes with part of the produce of his farm, the craftsman with his wares ; all trade seems to have been conducted in the form of barter.

CHAPTER IV

THE TEACHINGS OF CHINA

AFTER the time of the Sage Emperor we come to a period of Japanese history of great importance. Japan, as we have seen, had become open to the influence of Chinese civilisation, and the latter produced a great effect upon the country ; it is not too much to say that under this Chinese influence the Japanese nation was moulded into the form in which it has become known to the world. For one thing, the Japanese have always been a race very open to outside influence ; they have been, and are, eager to accept new ideas, new learning, new culture. Many centuries ago they gladly received learning and religion from China : in recent times they have just as eagerly seized upon all that the Western nations have to teach them, and are

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hastening to place themselves at the forefront of modern movements.

The religion received from China was Buddhism. Towards the end of the sixth century the Buddhist faith began to gain a footing in the land, and in time it spread so widely as almost to crowd out the Shinto worship: its temples, its priests, its nuns were found everywhere. Buddha was a great Indian teacher who was born several centuries before Christ, and whose teaching spread throughout India and the surrounding nations. China became a Buddhist country, and this faith was carried into Japan.

The Sage Emperor was followed by his son, a peaceable, quiet man of delicate health. A Chinese doctor came from Korea to attend upon him, and this was the introduction of the medical art in Japan. When he died two of his sons quarrelled over the succession and the country favoured the younger. This prince came to the throne, and afterwards met his death in a strange fashion. He had put to death unjustly one of his chief subjects—a man of royal blood—and had afterwards married the widow of the murdered prince and raised her to the position of empress. She already had a young son, and when she came to the palace the boy came with her. Now the Emperor became uneasy about this boy. One day he said to the Empress, “I fear this boy. When he becomes older he will learn that I was the cause of the death of his father, and then he may seek to revenge that injury which I have done to him.”

Unknown to both of them, the boy was near at hand and overheard the words of the Emperor. The thing which the Emperor had feared he now actually brought upon himself. Stirred by the speech he had overheard, the boy sought the room of the Emperor, found him asleep, and stabbed him to the heart. Then

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the young prince fled and took refuge in the house of a faithful noble, a retainer of his family.

This event was followed by a great uproar. The brother of the Emperor raised an army and marched upon the house of the noble with whom the prince had taken refuge. The house was attacked and there was a long and hard fight. At length the noble called a truce for a moment while he spoke with the enemy, and the end of the fight may be given in the words of the old chronicle. Speaking to the enemy, the noble said: "From of old down to the present time nobles have been known to hide in the palaces of kings. But kings have not yet been known to hide in the houses of nobles. Therefore I think that, though a noble exerting his utmost strength in the fight can scarcely conquer, yet must he die rather than desert a prince who, trusting in him, has entered into his house." Having thus spoken, he again took his weapons and went in again to fight. Then their strength being exhausted and their arrows finished, he said to the prince, "My hands are wounded and our arrows are likewise finished. We cannot now fight. What shall be done?" The prince replied, saying, "If that be so there is nothing more to do. Now slay me." So he thrust the prince to death with his sword, and forthwith killed himself by cutting off his own head. Here was the true Japanese spirit, faithful unto death.

CHAPTER V

THE COMING OF BUDDHISM

THE brother of the Emperor came to the throne under the title of Yūriyaku Tenno. He was a very

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violent man, and we read that he slew another prince of the royal house. This prince had two young sons whose names were Oke and Woke, that is, Great Basket and Little Basket. After the death of their father these boys fled to a distant province to hide themselves, and there became cowherds, and were safe from the

anger of the Emperor Yuryaku. Many stories of Yuryaku are told among the Japanese. Once he was making an imperial journey when he espied a house built with a raised roof in the style of a royal palace. He demanded the name of the owner, and was told it belonged to a noble named Shiki. The Emperor flew into a rage and ordered that the house should be burned down at once. But Shiki made haste to seek pardon. He prostrated himself before the angry ruler and humbly begged forgiveness for being so stupid as to build such a house. And he offered a present, a white dog wearing a coat of cloth and led

A Court lady of Nasa period by a cord. The Emperor was pleased with the dog, so he forgave Shiki and the house was not destroyed.

Upon another journey he saw a beautiful girl washing clothes in a river. He talked with her, and when he was leaving the place he said to her, "Do not thou marry a husband. I will send messengers to conduct thee to my palace." Then he went on his journey and all thought of the poor girl passed from his mind. But though the Emperor had forgotten, the maiden did not forget. Year after year she expected the messengers but they came not. And the years went by until she had become an old woman. But



A Court lady of Nasa period

The Coming of Buddhism

she had received the all-powerful command of the Emperor and she still waited. At last she said to herself, "My face and form are lean and withered ; there is no longer any hope for me at the palace, where all the attendants are young and beautiful. And yet, if I do not show my mighty sovereign how truly I have awaited his command, the disappointment will be more than I can bear." So she took such humble gifts as were at her command, and went to the palace and laid them before the Emperor.

He looked with surprise upon the poor gifts and upon the withered form which was humbly bent before him. "What old woman art thou ?" demanded the Emperor, "and why dost thou come before my throne ?" Then she said, "On such and such a day in such and such a year I received the command of my sovereign that I was to await the coming of messengers to conduct me to the palace. And I have waited through many, many years, and now all hope has gone. Nevertheless, at the last I have come to show that I was faithful to my lord's behest." And the Emperor was filled with sorrow and cried out : "I had utterly forgotten my command ; and thou hast spent the years of thy prime in vain, waiting for a summons that came not. It is too pitiful." So he gave the old woman many rich presents, and consoled her as well as he could.

When Yuriyaku died he was followed by his son. Five years later the son died, and now there was no one to fill the throne. There had been such fierce quarrels in the royal family and so many princes had been slain that no heir of the true blood seemed to exist. Search was made on every hand but all in vain, and no one knew anything of the two young princes Oke and Woke, who had fled to a distant part of the land when their father was slain by Yuriyaku.

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Now it happened that a new Governor was sent to this distant province, and one of the first things that he did was to attend at a feast made by a rich man. It was in the household of this man that Oke and Woke were serving as humble labourers. After the feast there was drinking and dancing and singing, and the two princes, now young men, were called upon by their master to sing and dance, for they were famous among their fellows for their gifts. They could sing songs which no one else had heard, songs which they had learned in their boyhood at the Court of the Emperor, and not taught in any other place. When they came forward, the Governor, fresh from the Court, listened to them in great surprise. How came it that these cowherds could sing famous Court songs, such as common people were not allowed to learn? He made inquiries, and found at length that the cowherds were really princes and members of the imperial family. He brought them to the palace, and their friends gathered around them, and in turn they became emperors and ruled over Japan.

There is no name of great importance among the rulers that followed until we come to the time of the Empress Suiko, who held sway from 593 to 628. Under her the land was really ruled by her nephew, Shokotu Taishi, a name which means "Great Teacher of the Divine Virtue." This name was given to him because he was the principal founder of Buddhism in Japan, and the Japanese Buddhists still hold his memory in great reverence. Many stories are told of Shokotu. It is said that he could talk as soon as he was born, and that he had so strong a memory as never to forget a name, a face, or a fact which he had once seen or known. He had a wonderful power of attending to many things at the same moment. He could listen to eight suitors at once and give a proper answer to

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each of them. Because of this he was known among the people by a title which meant Prince of Eight Ears.

Shokotu became a very earnest Buddhist, and took as his teacher a priest who had come over from Korea. He built many Buddhist temples, and great men who wished to win his favour built others, and Buddhism rapidly spread and pushed aside the older Shinto faith. But it only pushed it aside, it did not destroy it. So strongly was the ancestor-worship planted in the hearts of the people that the Buddhist priests were compelled to accept it, and the Buddhist temple and the Shinto temple stood side by side—nay, more, very often the same priest did duty in both temples. Shinto-worship had been a very simple affair. The Shinto follower paid homage to the gods whom he considered to have been the ancestors of the Emperor, to the memory of great men, and offered up prayers to the gods of wind and fire and pestilence, and to the domestic gods who were supposed to rule over his home, the goddess of food, the deities who had under their charge the kitchen, the gate, and the cauldron. But the Shinto priest had no sacred book and taught no code of morals ; he spoke neither of heaven nor hell, he did not say that this thing was good and that was bad, but men were left to do as they pleased.

Buddhism changed all that. It brought in sacred books and uttered the first commandments which the Japanese had ever heard. It forbade lying, stealing, intemperance, murder, and other forms of evil-doing. It reared splendid temples filled with chanting priests, who marched in processions before altars decked with flowers and blazing with candles, while clouds of incense filled the air. All the active minds of Japan followed Shokotu in supporting this new faith, and Buddhism became triumphant.

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The adoption of this faith brought about a great change in the habits of the people. The Old Japanese ate flesh as freely as any other food. Buddhism forbids the taking of life, and so its disciples must forego a meat diet. Yet the Buddhist rule was never strictly observed in Japan, for fish continued to be eaten,

and under cover of this concession meat was sometimes sold. For instance, over certain cook-shops appeared a notice that "mountain whale" could be obtained there. Now those who understood purchased this "mountain whale," and obtained for their money excellent venison, procured from the herds of deer which swarm in some parts of the country: the sign was a pious fraud. Still, speaking broadly, it may be said that the Japanese abandoned meat as a regular article of food on the adoption of Buddhism.



A Court attendant of Heian period

Shokotu died in 622, and it is said that two years before his death the earliest chronicle of Japanese history had been put together. We can easily

believe that this had been carried out under the sway of so wise and good a ruler, who strove his utmost to do his best for Japan, but no trace of this book is left: it is believed that it was burned in 645. But the work was not delayed for long. In 673 the Emperor Temmu came to the throne, and he gave orders that the ancient traditions and records should be arranged and set down in one book. There was an officer of the household who had a wonderful memory, and as the records were arranged this man learned them by heart. But the Emperor died in 686, long before the

The Puppet Emperors

work was finished, and for twenty-five years the chronicle lay in the memory of the officer. An empress succeeded, and by her orders the traditions were set down at the dictation of him who had learned them, and the chronicle thus made exists to the present day. Eight years later a second chronicle was published, and upon these two books rests much of the authority for the life of Old Japan.

CHAPTER VI

THE PUPPET EMPERORS

WE have now reached a period when the affairs of Japan come into the light of history ; the old myths and legends have gone, and from the time when Buddhism and Chinese learning came into the land the records are clear and full. Before long the Chinese plan of government was introduced, and the officers of the State were arranged in rank according to the Chinese system—a system which lasted until 1868. At the head of all stood the Emperor, the “Son of Heaven,” and in theory he was held to be absolute owner and ruler of Japan ; in practice he had little or no power at all. This position was brought about by another drift of Chinese influence. In China a custom had grown up of an emperor abdicating, that is, giving up the throne to his heir, and retiring to a monastery to spend his old age in prayer.

This custom was carried to an extreme in Japan. Instead of an old and weary emperor giving up his throne in favour of a peaceful retirement, the Japanese emperor was forced to abdicate after a short period of rule, perhaps while still a young man. Thus we read of an emperor who was placed on the throne at

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the age of nine and retired at the age of twenty-six, another reigned from eight years of age to twenty-three, a third became emperor at five years old and abdicated at twenty, and there were many such cases ; indeed it often happened that there were three or four retired emperors in the country besides the actual emperor on the throne. These abdications were brought about by powerful officers of the court who

had managed to seize the reins of government and place upon the throne a boy whom they could easily control. Thus came about the line of the Puppet Emperors.

During the Middle Ages of Japan, let us say from 650 to 1050, the real ruler of the land was always found



Nobles of Fujiwa period composing poems

in the ranks of one great family, that of the Fujiwara, whose name means Wistaria Field. For a period of four hundred years the chief posts of government were held by members of this family, and, as a Japanese writer remarks, the emperor was simply a piece of their property. Not only did the Fujiwara rule the emperor, but from their family were drawn the wives of the emperors, and the ladies of the court. Thus their influence was all-powerful, and they used it to degrade the Japanese rulers. Instead of a young emperor being trained to take part in affairs and rule his country, he was tempted to waste his time and his strength in every kind of idle pleasure and every useless form of amusement.

The effect of this was that the emperors became a

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feeble race, and the Fujiwara were supreme in civil affairs. They were not a great warrior family. If an expedition was set on foot to attack the Aino tribes or to put down a rebellion in a distant province, one of the Fujiwara was appointed to the command as a matter of course. It did not follow that he left his palace. As a rule he called upon some noted warrior to lead the force and undertake the campaign. But when the victory was announced he calmly took the credit of it, and saw to it that he received rich rewards for the success.

As time went on this practice brought about the downfall of the Fujiwara. It was a period of great strife, and the military families were called upon very often to bring their warriors to the aid of the empire. Little by little the power of the soldier clans grew, until those who had served the Fujiwara began to feel their strength, and to set themselves up as rivals of the great governing family. Such a soldier clan was that of the Taira, founded in the ninth century, and famous for centuries as military vassals of the crown. A little later rose another great military family, that of the Minamoto, and in time the strife between these clans brought about the fiercest of civil wars. A family whose fame is peaceful also rose in this period, the Sugawara, noted for their devotion to learning. Down to the present day this love of letters has continued, and among the tutors of recent emperors have been members of the great family of Sugawara.

About the middle of the eleventh century a great struggle arose among the clans; the Fujiwara lost their pride of place, and the Taira family rose to power. About this time the eastern coasts of Japan were infested by Korean pirates, who plundered the trading junks, sacked and burned seaport towns, and

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slew the unlucky people who fell into their hands or made slaves of them. One of the Taira, a leader named Tadamori, sailed against these pirates, and won great fame by destroying them and freeing the coasts of Japan. After the death of Tadomori, his son, Kiyomori, became the head of the Taira family, and now came a time of miserable strife, when the whole land became a battlefield on which the quarrels of the great clans were fought out.

About the year 1150 there arose a dispute as to who should come to the throne. Kiyomori and the Taira put forward one claimant, the Minamoto family put forward another, and a fierce civil war broke out. In 1156 there was a great battle between the clans, and Kiyomori won the day and gained for himself a position of supreme power in Japan. Kiyomori made a cruel use of his power, destroying all who had opposed him, and the Minamoto and Fujiwara began to form plans to overthrow him and the Taira. This conspiracy was headed by Yoshitomo, a leader of the Minamoto, but the Taira leader caught word of it and fell upon the plotters, and sent them flying in every direction to save their lives. The anger of Kiyomori was directed, above all, against Yoshitomo and his family, and he gave orders that every member of it should be put to death.

Yoshitomo was killed by men whom the tyrant sent after him to his place of refuge, and a number of his sons were slain. But two boys were left alive and these were destined to become great men and great heroes, who should completely overthrow the power of the Taira. The boys were Yoritomo and Yoshitsuné, and when the storm of the tyrant's anger broke out, the latter was a babe in his mother's arms. His mother was Tokiwa, a very beautiful woman, who fled with her three youngest children upon hearing

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that the Taira soldiers were coming to slay them. Yoshitsuné lived to become a famous hero of romance. Many wonderful tales of his skill and courage are told in Japanese story, and both poets and painters love to tell and picture this incident of his infancy. They show Tokiwa hurrying on through a wild storm of driving snow, with Yoshitsuné swung on his mother's back, and the other little ones toddling at her side. In their sad and forlorn condition they met a Taira soldier, but he, instead of proving to be an enemy, took pity upon them and found them a shelter.

While in hiding Tokiwa heard that the tyrant had seized her mother. She had been brought up to believe that her mother must be considered before her children, so she went back and threw herself and her children at the feet of Kiyomori and begged for mercy for her mother. The tyrant's heart was softened by these entreaties, and he not only released her mother but spared her children, and sent them to various monasteries to be held in safe keeping.

In the monastery to which he was sent Yoshitsuné grew up a strong, bold, active lad, a splendid archer and a most skilful swordsman. When he was sixteen he fled from the monastery and took his way to a distant province inhabited by wild and barbarous tribes. Here he entered the service of the Governor, and spent years fighting under his banner. In this way he learned all about war and trained himself to



Outdoor costume : Fujiwa period

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become the brave and heroic leader he proved to be in later years.

It is said that upon this flight from the monastery he first met with his follower Benkei, a servant almost as famous as his master, and a man who has left a great name in Japanese legend. Yoshitsuné came to a bridge which was haunted by a dreaded robber. Every passenger was bound to cross the bridge, for the river was deep and there was neither boat nor ford in the neighbourhood. The robber prowled near at hand, waylaying solitary passengers and plundering them. He sprang from his hiding-place upon Yoshitsuné, but for the first time he met his match. The youth showed such nimbleness and such wonderful skill in sword-play that the terrible robber was utterly overcome. Benkei yielded to Yoshitsuné and took him as his master, and ever after that day followed him as a most humble and faithful servant.

CHAPTER VII

THE PUPPET EMPERORS (*continued*)

Now while Yoshitsuné was growing up into a gallant soldier, the eldest brother, Yoritomo, had been forming plots against Kiyomori and the rule of the Taira. At last Yoritomo thought the time had come to attack the Taira, and he called upon his fellow-clansmen of the Minamoto and upon all who hated the Taira to join him. But he had been too rash: the time was not yet ripe, and only three hundred men joined his banner. Upon this small band fell a great force of the Taira and utterly routed it. Yoritomo and six friends fled from the slaughter and hid themselves in the trunk of a huge hollow tree.

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The Taira were in eager pursuit of them, and a man was sent to search the tree. Luckily for Yoritomo and his friends, he was at heart a friend of the Minamoto and he called out that the tree was empty, while he softly bade the fugitives to lie still. To show that the tree was empty, he thrust in his spear and turned it about. As he did so two doves flew out, and those watching from a distance felt satisfied that nothing was there or the doves would have been disturbed before. To this day the people of the Minamoto family do not eat doves because of this wonderful way in which a pair of them saved their great ancestor, Yoritomo. The soldier also reported that the mouth of the opening was covered with spiders' webs, and no further search was made.

Yoritomo was not yet beaten. He fled to a part of the land where he was beyond the reach of the Taira, and again sent messengers to call upon the enemies of Kiyomori to join him. The Minamoto gathered around him, and his brother Yoshitsuné came from the north with a strong body of troops to add to Yoritomo's power. In the midst of this preparation the Taira suffered a great loss in the death of Kiyomori. The stern and powerful old ruler died in A.D. 1181. He knew well what troubles were looming in the future, and he warned his family to beware of Yoritomo. The old chronicler gives us this bitter speech which he uttered on his death-bed: "My regret is only that I am dying, and have not yet seen the head of Yoritomo of the Minamoto. After my decease do not make offerings to Buddha on my behalf, nor read sacred books. Only cut off the head of Yoritomo of the Minamoto and hang it on my tomb."

But the triumph of Yoritomo was now near at hand. He directed the march of three armies upon the capital then fixed at Kyoto. The first was under

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his own command, the second under his brother Yoshitsuné, the third he had placed under the command of a cousin. As the armies closed in upon Kyoto, the third was the earliest to engage with the enemy. The Taira were beaten, and Yoritomo's cousin marched into the capital in triumph. Puffed up with this success, the general lost his head and took upon himself the airs of a conqueror. He aimed at

putting Yoritomo aside and seizing the chief power for himself. From this dream he had a rude awakening. Yoshitsuné came swiftly upon him, dashed his army in pieces, and the general fled. He saw that he could expect no mercy from his angry relatives, and, full of shame and despair, he took his own life.

Yoshitsuné now set off in pursuit of the Taira. The defeated clan had left the capital and marched westwards, taking

with them the young emperor, whose mother was a member of the Taira family, the daughter of Kiyomori himself.

Finding that Yoshitsuné was hot upon their track, the Taira sought to escape by sea. Fighting men, women, children, servants and followers, the whole clan embarked upon five hundred junks and sailed away down the Inland Sea, making for Kyushu, the great southern island of Japan, where they hoped to find a refuge. But they were not so easily to escape. The Minamoto gathered a fleet of junks. The army went on board, and the pursuit was continued. At the far western extremity of the Inland Sea the



A mounted warrior of Taira family



A COURT LADY OF THE EIGHTH CENTURY

The Puppet Emperors

Minamoto caught sight of the mass of flying junks, and the Taira knew that their enemies were upon them and turned at bay at Dan-no-ura.

Then followed the greatest sea-fight in the story of Old Japan. The junks were laid alongside each other, and their decks became battle-grounds where the fierce warriors plied spear and sword or shot swift arrows into the joints of their enemies' harness. The Taira fought with the fury of despair, fought, not only for their own lives and the lives of their wives and children, but for the precious freight which their fleet bore. The boy-emperor, his mother and grandmother, were with them, the ladies being the daughter and widow of their great leader Kiyomori. They fought in vain. Their vessels were encumbered by many non-combatants, and the fierce warriors of the Minamoto swarmed over junk after junk, putting all to the sword.

The grandmother of the boy-emperor had watched the fight closely, and saw that escape was impossible for the junk in which they were. But she was resolved not to fall into the hands of the hated Minamoto. She seized the emperor in her arms and sprang into the sea ; they sank at once and were never seen again. With them perished nearly the whole of the Taira clan. The Minamoto slew and spared not. A few junks of the Taira fled from the fight and gained the southern island, where the people hid themselves in the wild valleys which lie in its farthest recesses. It is said that their descendants are to be found there to this day, and are marked by a fierce surliness of manner, and will have nothing to do with strangers. This springs from the times when they were compelled to keep out of the way of every one lest they should fall under the vengeance of their enemies.

This vengeance was a thing to be dreaded. No

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mercy was shown in these terrible civil wars. Yoritomo gave orders that every Taira man, woman, or child was to be put to death wherever found, and the orders were carried out to the letter. But Yoritomo was now about to stain his famous career with the darkest blot which lies upon it. The land was ringing with stories of the great deeds of the gallant young general Yoshitsuné; Yoritomo became jealous of his brother. He forgot all the great services which the splendid young soldier had rendered him: he thought no longer of the great sea-fight of Dan-no-ura, where Yoshitsuné had destroyed his enemies once and for ever: he felt deep anger when he saw how the hearts of all turned to the heroic figure of the victor, and he resented the fame and success which his brother had won.



Lady's costume of Gempei period

After crushing the Taira, Yoshitsuné marched northwards to meet Yoritomo, bringing prisoners and captured banners to lay at his brother's feet. But on his way he was checked by a message commanding him not to enter his brother's presence, and to give up his trophies of victory. There is still to be seen in a Buddhist monastery the noble and touching letter which Yoshitsuné sent to his brother on receiving this harsh and ungrateful message. He declared his good faith and loyalty, he denied every report of ambition and self-seeking, but all went for nothing. Yoritomo's heart was turned against his brother, and soon Yoshitsuné was compelled to fly in order to save

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his life. His brother closed every road and bridge against him and posted guards to seize him, but Yoshitsuné, in disguise and attended only by the faithful Benkei, managed to win his way to the distant province where he had learned the first lessons of war, and where he hoped to lie in safety.

On his flight he had some very near escapes from danger. One day he was flying from the soldiers of Yoritomo when he came to a barrier which was strongly guarded. The attendants did not recognise the young hero and Benkei, for they were dressed like the wandering priests who go up and down the country begging for food and money. The fugitives thought that as priests they would easily gain a passage. But no. The strictest orders had been given that no one might pass, and the watchmen drove them back. Then the cunning Benkei plucked from his bosom a roll of blank paper and pretended to read from it. He recited that they held a commission from the abbot of the chief monastery of the capital to go through the land and gather money for casting a great bell to hang in their temple, and the anger of Heaven was called down upon all who should stay them. The keepers of the barrier were deeply impressed on hearing this holy message, and at once made way for them to pass.

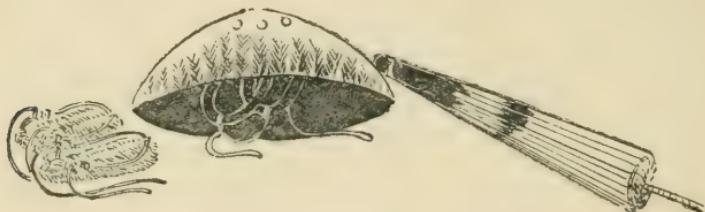
For a time Yoshitsuné lived in safety among his old friends, and then a new Governor was appointed. This man was eager to gain the favour of Yoritomo, and in 1189 he caused Yoshitsuné to be murdered; the noble victim was only thirty years of age. The death of this beloved hero caused so much anger among the people that Yoritomo was forced to march against the Governor and punish him, though the man had only done that which Yoritomo wished.

Yoritomo now stood at the full height of power.

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He had destroyed the Taira, the emperor had perished with them, and the leader of the Minamoto placed on the throne another child-emperor, a boy seven years old, and received for himself the title of *Shogun* or Chief General.

Under this title he ruled Japan well and firmly, and with him began that system of dual rule which has given rise to a mistaken belief that



Kasa and Waraji (sandals and umbrellas)

Japan for many centuries had two emperors, the Mikado, the descendant of the Sun Goddess, a kind of spiritual emperor, and the Shogun or Tycoon, as he was called in later times, an emperor who took charge of the practical details of government. This was never so. There was but one emperor, the Mikado, though often enough he was a mere child shut up in his palace and never seen of the people. Yet for all that he was the real emperor, and the Shogun ruled on his behalf and was always careful to say that his authority came from the Mikado, though, in point of fact, the Mikado was simply a puppet in his hands. This system of Mikado and Shogun, or Tycoon, lasted from 1190 to 1868.

Yoritomo made splendid use of his power as the first Shogun. The land was in a terrible state after the fierce civil wars of the last hundred years. He set up courts where robbers and law-breakers could be tried, he introduced government and order into provinces where law and order had been unknown,

The Rise of the Samurai

and for the first time for centuries he gave a little peace to the land. In order to establish his authority in the provinces, he chose able soldiers and placed them there to force men to keep the law and cease from strife. In order to maintain these military families he laid a tax upon the product of the soil, and thus, in forcing the husbandman to support the soldier, he made a beginning of the feudal system which was to last in Japan until within living memory.

So wise and strong was Yoritomo's rule that the Japanese regard his name as one of the greatest in their history, and give him high praise save for his cruel treatment of Yoshitsuné. In 1198 he met with a severe accident: he fell from his horse, and was so badly hurt that he died early in the next year, in the fifty-third year of his age. His life marks an important epoch in Japanese history. He was the first Shogun: he set on foot the beginning of the feudal system: he restored law and order after the devastation of the fierce wars of the clans.

CHAPTER VIII

THE RISE OF THE SAMURAI

IN the history of Japan from the Middle Ages to the present day the order of men known as *Samurai* has taken a part of the greatest importance. What was a *Samurai*? He was, first of all and last of all, a soldier — a man who had the right to bear two swords, to wield one in defence of his lord, to use the other to take his own life before he would suffer dishonour. The *Samurai* were the knights who formed the military clans, each of the latter under the rule of a

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great lord who was served with the utmost devotion by his followers.

When Chinese influence swept into Japan, one of its effects was to divide the officers of the State into two separate classes, those who took charge of civil affairs, matters of government, and those who took in hand the campaigns which the empire waged against its foes. Some great families showed much skill in military affairs, and these leaders little by little gathered around them a military class.

In former days the Japanese farmer had been a warrior too, when occasion called him to lay aside the pruning-hook for the sword, but now the husbandman was left in peace to till his fields while the bolder spirits followed a great lord to war. Thus a famous commander came to have a body of troops who were ready to obey his commands and were always at his service. To maintain these men a tax was laid upon the farmers, who had to find the rice which supported this military order. In time this order became the Samurai of Japan. It stood entirely apart from the main body of the nation and ruled with absolute sway over farmer, craftsman, and merchant. Its ranks were filled by its own children, and as generation after generation was born into and grew up in the order it became a great military caste, bound by rules as strict as ever held together any order of chivalry.

The young Samurai was brought up in a school of the most severe discipline. He was made to endure hardship without complaint, to despise pleasure and gain, to practise self-denial without hope of praise, to fear nothing save dishonour. Above all, he was trained to give perfect obedience and perfect loyalty to his lord. His life was to be nothing to him if his lord required it, or if his honour would be stained

The Rise of the Samurai

by keeping it. One of the first things he was taught was the ceremony of *hara-kiri*, the manner in which his own life was to be taken if need should arise. He slew himself by plunging his sword into his body in a certain prescribed fashion. He wore two swords, one large and one small. The large sword, as we have said, was to use against the enemies of his lord, the small to use upon himself if overcome in the fight, for those stern warriors preferred death to captivity. He was also expected to slay himself if he committed any crime worthy of death, for it would not have been in keeping with the dignity of his order that a Samurai should be handed over to a common executioner.

The training of a Samurai began in his very infancy. His first lessons were those of supreme faith and loyalty to his elders and teachers, of utter disregard of self. The following true story will show how deeply such instruction sank into the minds of Samurai children. A certain prince had been offended by a Samurai gentleman and ordered that he should be put to death. A freshly severed head was brought to the prince, but he was not sure if it was the head of the man whose life he sought. The man's son, a Samurai boy only seven years old, was in his power, and he sent for the boy.

"Is that your father's head?" demanded the prince. The child saw at once that it was the head of a stranger, and in a flash he grasped the situation. His father had escaped and was in flight. How could he be given more time to make good his escape? There was one dreadful way, and the child took it without a tremor. He bent before the head and saluted it with every sign of reverence and grief. Then, whipping out his tiny sword, he thrust it into his own body and slew himself upon the spot. The prince was completely deceived. He thought the boy

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had killed himself in pure grief for his father's death, and he made no further search for the Samurai, who gained a place of safety.

Another story is told of an elder Samurai. He was one of the garrison of a besieged castle, and the lord of the castle knew not whether he could hold the place until a relieving army should arrive. But he believed that the enemy also was weak, and he sent out a Samurai to discover the strength of the foe. The knight crept into the camp of the besiegers, and soon found that they were little to be feared. But he was captured and threatened with crucifixion unless he reported to his friends that resistance was hopeless owing to the strength of the enemy. He pretended to consent, and was led to the bank of the moat which surrounded the castle. There, in full sight of his wife and children, he shouted the true tidings of the weakness of the enemy and bade his comrades fight on in hope, and then went to his most cruel death, his face shining with joy at the glory of this opportunity of serving his friends.

The Samurai were a well-educated class. The school day of a young Samurai was divided into two parts. In the earlier portion of the day he worked under teachers who taught him to love the learning and literature of Japan, while the latter part of the day was spent in training his body to the use of arms. He learned how to ride a horse, how to shoot with the bow, how to handle the spear, and, above all and beyond all, how to wield a sword. The sword of a Samurai was not only the emblem of his rank, but also the idol of his heart. It was the most precious thing he owned, and he took the greatest care of it; if it bore the name of a famous maker that was a matter for especial pride.

The sword of the Samurai had a blade about three



AN OFFICIAL OF THE EARLY FUJIWAR
PERIOD IN STATE ROBES. See 14



The Rise of the Samurai

feet long, its handle fitting into a long hilt which was grasped with both hands. The blade had only one edge and was slightly curved toward the point. It was carried in a scabbard thrust through the *obi* or belt, and the edge was uppermost. The best of the old Japanese swords are said to be the finest blades ever known, and a sword by a great maker was handed down from father to son as the most precious of family heirlooms. Every Samurai spent much time in sword-play and sword-practice, until he was completely master of his formidable weapon. He did not thrust, but cut and slashed, and his sweeping blows came with the swiftness and force of a thunderbolt. Japanese tales are full of wonderful stories of the prowess of heroes when handling this beloved weapon, of the enemies they sliced from head to foot, of a whole group cut in half at a single blow. It is no wonder, then, that an old law-giver says, "A girded sword is the living soul of the Samurai."

The keen edge and perfect temper of these blades were often proved by the feat of cutting through a pile of copper coins. The sword would be driven through the heap of metal without nicking its edge. Another feat, intended this time to test the swiftness of handling, was to set a chop-stick on its end and allow it to fall. Before the slip of wood (about six inches long) reached the table the young Samurai had to seize the handle of his sword, draw it from the scabbard, and cut the chopstick in two.

For centuries, then, the people of Japan were ranged in these four classes—Samurai, farmers, craftsmen, and merchants—and the Samurai bore rule over the rest. Their authority rose even to the power of life and death. If a Samurai drew his great sword and cut down an inferior no one could call him to account. He had only to point to the words of a famous law-

Japan

giver : "The Samurai are masters of the four classes. Farmers, craftsmen, and merchants may not behave in a rude manner towards Samurai . . . and a Samurai is not to be interfered with in cutting down a man who has behaved to him in a manner other than is expected."

It might be thought that this privilege would cause the Samurai to be overbearing and cruel to the lower orders. It was not so. The instances of men being slain wantonly by the warrior class were very few and far between. The training of the young knight all went to make him a polished gentleman, thoughtful for others, courteous and dignified, a terrible being when his own dignity was attacked, but otherwise tolerant and amiable to the last degree.

CHAPTER IX

THE COMING OF CHRISTIANITY

AFTER the death of Yoritomo his house fell upon evil days. There was no one of his family who could fill his great place, and the ruling power slipped into the hands of the Hojo clan, who retained it for more than a hundred years (A.D. 1200-1333).

Their rule is marked by one great event, the attack made upon Japan by the great Mongol prince, Kublai Khan, in 1281. Kublai Khan, one of the greatest conquerors the world has ever known, had overrun China with his hordes and subdued it. He heard that there was great wealth in Japan, and he resolved to add the islands to his vast empire. He sent a huge army of one hundred thousand men in three thousand vessels and attacked the island of Kyushu. The Japanese rose fiercely against the invader and overthrew

The Coming of Christianity

the vast host with immense slaughter. This was by land, and by sea a terrible storm arose, a fierce typhoon, and dashed in pieces Kublai's fleet. Never before or since has an invader dared to set foot on the soil of Japan.

The Hojos at last fell, and they fell because they forgot their place. In 1318 they attacked the Emperor



Go-Daigo and drove him from the throne. But the country at once rose against them and hurled them from power. Go-Daigo was restored to the throne, but soon a dispute arose about the crown, and a second emperor was set up by some powerful nobles of the north. For some sixty years there were two emperors in Japan, one at the "Northern Court," the other at the "Southern Court." The Northern emperor was supported by a powerful clan, the Ashikaga, and with their aid he became supreme. The head of the Ashikaga became the Shogun, and this office stayed in their family from 1333 to 1565.

The Court of the Ashikaga Shoguns became famous as a centre of learning and refinement. Some of them were men who loved the arts and gave their patronage to painters and writers, and the palaces they built are among the most beautiful buildings in Japan. But for the country at large this time of the Ashikaga rule was wretched in the extreme. The day when

Japan

a strong man like Yoritomo had kept order in the land was long since gone, and the great lords led their armies against their neighbours and there was no one to hinder them.

These lords were known as Daimyos. The word "daimyo" means "great name," and was the title given to the head of a powerful family. He lived in a strong castle supported by his retainers, the Samurai of his clan, and ruled the country around just as a great English baron ruled his estates in our own feudal times. The Daimyo was the baron, the Samurai were the knights who followed his banner. A powerful Daimyo was often followed by many thousands of Samurai, and the whole of this great train had to be supported by the husbandmen who cultivated the land of the Daimyo. Thus, when Daimyo fought with Daimyo and armies marched across the fields, the husbandman suffered from friend and foe. The friend required his grain as a matter of course, the foe plundered and destroyed. Here and there was found a district where a strong Daimyo lived quietly and kept the peace, but such spots were few and far between in these Middle Ages of Japan.

Although Marco Polo had told the European world of Japan towards the end of the thirteenth century, it was not until 1542 that Europeans gained the coast of the island empire. The first to land in Japan were some shipwrecked Portuguese sailors. But a few years later a Portuguese traveller named Mendez Pinto reached Kyushu, the southern island, and he and his friends were kindly received by the authorities, who showed great eagerness to learn all they could about the Portuguese.

Pinto greatly delighted the Japanese by firing off a matchlock which he had with him, and he also taught them how to make powder. This was the first

The Coming of Christianity

time that fire-arms had been seen in Japan, and the Japanese armourers at once began to make matchlocks for their own people. These clever craftsmen turned out guns in large numbers until, before many years, matchlocks were in common use in the land. These weapons continued in use until modern times, when the Japanese army laid down the clumsy old matchlock of the fifteenth-century style to seize the breech-loader of to-day.

Pinto made two voyages to Japan, and on the second of these, in 1547, a strange incident occurred, an incident which had very important consequences. The ship was about to set sail from Japan when two men came down to the shore, flying from the pursuit of a body of horsemen. The fugitives begged the Portuguese to take them on board to save their lives. This was done, and no attention was paid to the pursuers, who demanded their return. The men were carried to Malacca, and here they were brought into the presence of the great Catholic missionary and saint, Father Francis Xavier. Xavier's thoughts were already strongly turned towards Japan, and he took deep interest in the fugitives, one of whom was Anjiro, a man of importance, and the other his servant. The two Japanese became Christians and were baptized, Anjiro receiving the name of Paul, his servant the name of John. They learned the Portuguese language and proved faithful assistants in the work upon which Xavier's heart was set—the conversion of Japan to the Christian faith.

He sailed to Japan with them in 1549 and landed in Satsuma, a province of Kyushu, where Anjiro's friends lived. They were received in very friendly fashion by the ruler of the province, who gave permission to them to preach the Christian religion, and Xavier laboured among the Japanese of those

Japan

parts with much success. In 1550 he crossed to the main island and made his way to Kyoto, the capital. Here he was not well received by the authorities, but he preached in the streets and made a deep impression on the people. In 1551 he left Japan after a stay of two years and three months, intending to establish a mission in China. But he died the next year, in the forty-sixth year of his age, and his body was carried to Goa and buried there.

Xavier had left followers in Japan to continue the work he had begun, and the Christian faith spread rapidly. At the same time the foreign trade of the country grew apace. The Portuguese were still the only Europeans who sought Japan for trading purposes, and their ships became well known off the coast. The port of Nagasaki was handed over to them, and it became a Christian city. Missions were established in all directions, churches were built in the capital and many other cities, and the Jesuit fathers who spread the faith were heard eagerly in many a village and hamlet.

In 1582 a mission was sent to the Pope, and the long journey was made in safety. Rome itself can hardly have seen a stranger sight than that day, more than three hundred years ago, when two Christian Japanese princes rode through the streets, clothed in robes stiff with magnificent embroidery, bearing in their girdles the two swords, the mark of their rank, and escorted by a splendid train of Roman princes, papal soldiery, and great officials of the Vatican. Amid a thunder of guns and the cheers of a vast crowd of the people the Japanese princes gained the Hall of Audience, and bent low before the Pope, Gregory XIII. The Pope received them with great honour; he "hastened to raise them up and kissed their foreheads." Before the end of the century some of the greatest

Three Great Men—I

men of Japan had become Christians, and in the provinces under their sway the converts could be numbered by the hundred thousand.

CHAPTER X

THREE GREAT MEN—I

THE day when Christianity was spreading so rapidly throughout Japan was also the day when three of her greatest men were active in the land: these men were Nobunaga, Hideyoshi, and Ieyasu. The first of these was a great friend of the Christian faith, though he never became a Christian: the last proved a fierce and terrible enemy.

Nobunaga was a Daimyo, but not one of the highest rank. His property was small, but he was not slow in enlarging it at the expense of his neighbours. His retainers formed a body of well-drilled troops, he himself was a skilful general, and, above all, he had Hideyoshi as his right-hand man. Hideyoshi was at first a simple soldier in the service of his lord, but his talents for war were of so high an order that he soon rose to the position of second in command. In this place he was of immense service to Nobunaga. He was so full of cunning ideas, so clever in handling troops, so swift to devise plans which would throw the enemy into confusion, that it was said that the coming of Hideyoshi to the aid of an army was as good as adding ten thousand men to its ranks.



Gumbai and Saihai (war fan and baton)

Japan

The power of Nobunaga grew rapidly, and at last there came to him an opportunity which he gladly seized. The Ashikaga Shoguns were ruling very badly, and one of them was murdered ; a younger brother of the murdered man asked Nobunaga to help him to become Shogun, and Nobunaga leapt at the alliance.

He marched to the capital with a large army and placed his candidate in the office of Shogun. The Shogun induced the emperor to confer on Nobunaga the title of Vice-Shogun, and Nobunaga, with the aid of Hideyoshi, busied himself in restoring the capital to order.

Nobunaga now marched against some great lords who had not submitted to the authority of the new Shogun, and in this campaign he was assisted by Hideyoshi and by Ieyasu, a man belonging to a branch of the great Minamoto clan, and destined himself to become the founder of a great line of Shoguns. Nobunaga overthrew this group of his enemies, but was soon called upon to combat fresh foes who were marching on the capital and were backed up by powerful allies. These allies were the Buddhist monks of a great monastery which stood a few miles from Kyoto. The Buddhist priests and monks were often not only a religious but also a political and military force. They bore arms and were famous as fighting men : a large monastery could put a strong body of troops in the field.

The monastery near Kyoto was of immense size, a small city in itself. It contained three thousand buildings, and its army of warrior monks had been in the habit of taking liberties with the government of the capital a few miles away. The Buddhists chafed under the strict rule of Nobunaga and gladly gave aid to his enemies, furnishing them with shelter and supplies as they moved upon Kyoto. But Nobunaga hemmed

Three Great Men—I

in his foes so cleverly that they were glad to beg for peace and to retire to their own provinces. Then Nobunaga turned upon the monastery and took a terrible revenge. He burned it to the ground, slew great numbers of the monks, and drove the rest into exile. This was in 1571: from henceforth there was no love lost between Nobunaga and the Buddhist monks.

Nobunaga now began to show much favour to the Christians. He had not the smallest idea of becoming a Christian himself, but he thought the Christian faith would form a good balance to the Buddhist, and so strengthen his power. He built Christian churches, and the faith rose to great prosperity under his patronage. In 1573 he deposed the last of the Ashikaga Shoguns and took the authority of a Shogun into his own hands; now he ruled Japan in the name of the emperor, and ruled wisely and well.

But the powerful Daimyo of Chosu refused to own the authority of Nobunaga. In 1578 the ruler sent Hideyoshi to subdue the district, and for five years Hideyoshi waged war and conquered five provinces for his master. The final step of the long campaign was the capture of a great and powerful castle. Hideyoshi arrived before it, and the garrison laughed at him in defiance. The fortress was surrounded by lakes, and an attack by a large body of troops was impossible. But the besieged did not know Hideyoshi. He made no assault at all. Just below the castle a river carried off the water of the lakes. Hideyoshi ordered his troops to build a huge dam across the river and drown his enemies out. The dam was built and the water began to creep up the castle walls: Hideyoshi calmly waited for the fortress to surrender.

While this was going on, Nobunaga was marching with fresh troops to the aid of his famous general.

Japan

He sent his army straight to the besieged castle, but he himself went by a less direct route, and called at the capital on his way. In Kyoto he stayed for a few days in the temple of Honnoji, intending to follow his troops. Now among the generals of Nobunaga there was one named Akechi, and Akechi bore a deep grudge against his chief. It arose from Nobunaga's fondness for rough jokes. One day there had been a great feast in his palace and Nobunaga became over-merry ; he seized Akechi, took the general's head under his arm and rattled upon the head with his fan, as if playing a drum. This upsetting of his dignity gave mortal offence to Akechi, and he never forgave Nobunaga. Suddenly on their march to the castle he ordered his troops to turn aside and make for the capital. His captains asked him in surprise what this meant, and he replied grimly, " My enemy is in the Honnoji." Then he gained their aid by promising great rewards, and they marched with him against Nobunaga and the few guards who formed the ruler's escort.

Nobunaga was aroused by the attack on the temple. He looked out of a window, knew the traitors, and knew also that they sought his life. He made the best fight he could, but soon saw that the contest was hopeless. So he prepared to take his own life, for a Japanese gentleman must not suffer the dishonour of death at the hands of an enemy. He retired to an inner room of the temple and set it on fire. When the flames were leaping high, he calmly drew his sword and made the fatal stroke, and his body was buried in the blazing ruins. So died Nobunaga in A.D. 1582, and in the forty-ninth year of his age.

Three Great Men—II

CHAPTER XI

THREE GREAT MEN—II

WHEN the news of this terrible crime reached Hideyoshi, he at once started for Kyoto to avenge his master. He had captured the castle, and he bade his troops march towards the capital. In his eagerness he outstripped the army and pushed on, attended only by a small body-guard. Akechi feared the vengeance of Hideyoshi, and sent a band of assassins to waylay him. As it happened, the assassins came upon the general when he was alone, for he had ridden far in advance of his body-guard, and he had to fly. He galloped along a narrow lane which led between rice-fields to a small temple, and the assassins followed in hot pursuit. Midway in the lane, Hideyoshi leapt down, turned his horse round, and stabbed the powerful creature in the hind leg. Mad with pain, the horse galloped furiously back and charged full into the band of pursuers, hurling them in all directions. Hideyoshi ran on swiftly to the temple.

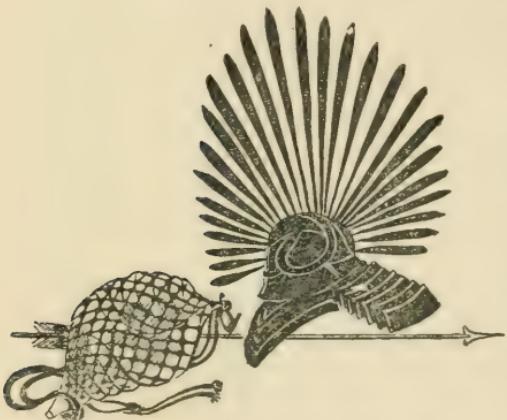
When he got there he found the priests taking a bath in a big common bath-tub. He told them quickly who he was and begged their aid. They told him to leap in and hide himself among them. He stripped off his clothes and sprang into the tub, so that when a number of the assassins rushed into the temple they could find nothing but a bath-tub full of priests. Away they hurried, thinking that the fugitive was racing ahead, and when the anxious body-guard came up, they found their master clad in the garb of a priest, and taking a comfortable rest after his refreshing bath.

Hideyoshi soon overcame Akechi, and the latter was

Japan

slain ; Hideyoshi now became the chief man of Japan. He was never made Shogun, for his family was too humble, but he held the power of the office with a grasp too firm to be shaken. He had no easy task to make himself supreme. There were many great princes who despised and disliked this man who had risen from the people, and they only bowed to his

authority after his marvellous military skill had crushed their armies and broken their power. His fiercest fight was with the great Satsuma clan, who were all-powerful in the island of Kyushu. The Satsuma warriors were famous for their bravery, their country was wild and difficult to traverse, and eight



Habuto and Horagai (helmet and horn)

provinces owned the Daimyo of Satsuma as their lord.

Hideyoshi marched against these dangerous enemies and fought with his never-failing skill and good fortune. He beat the Satsuma here, he beat them there, and finally he cooped them up in their chief city. All waited to see Hideyoshi crush his enemies with one last tremendous blow : he showed how clever a man he was by doing nothing of the sort. He admitted the Satsuma to peace, and gave them excellent terms. He restored to them the territory of their clan, merely imposing the condition that they should hold it as a grant from the emperor. In this way he conquered the Satsuma more surely than by the sword : they became, and remained, his faithful vassals.

One more great struggle lay before Hideyoshi and

Three Great Men—II

then he was master everywhere. This was a campaign against the great Hojo chief, who held several provinces in the south-eastern corner of the main island, in the neighbourhood of the sacred mountain Fujisan. This campaign is noteworthy because it marks the rise of the city of Yedo, which, under a change of name, has become the capital city of Tokio. When marching against the Hojo chief, Hideyoshi found that he must send many horses across the sea of Enshu, so he called upon the boatmen to ferry the horses over. They would not do so. They were very superstitious, and greatly feared the god of the sea, Ryujin. They declared that Ryujin did not like horses, and that he would raise a storm and sink them all if they took horses upon his waters. The wily general set himself to calm the fears of these men whose help he needed. He told them that the sea-god was far too polite to hinder any expedition for which the emperor had given orders. But to make things quite sure, he would write a letter to the god and ask him to ensure a safe passage for the ships. So a letter was written and addressed to "Mr. Ryujin"; it was then taken out in a boat and thrown into deep water. The simple boatmen now believed that all would be well, and the horses were ferried over without delay.

In the quelling of this Hojo chief, Hideyoshi was greatly helped by Ieyasu. When the campaign was over, the conquered country was placed in the charge of Ieyasu, and he fixed the seat of his lordship at Yedo, a little fishing village beside the sea. Under Ieyasu, Yedo grew into a place of great importance, and is now the chief town of Japan.

It was about this time that Hideyoshi began to look with an unfriendly eye upon the Christians. It was not that he disliked the Christian faith: he seems to have been a man who troubled very little about

Japan

any form of religion, but he became very uneasy about foreign influence in the country. He had hosts of spies, and one of these brought him a report of the chatter of a Portuguese sea-captain. "The king, my master," said the captain, "begins by sending priests who win over the people; and when this is done he despatches his troops to join the native Christians, and the conquest is easy and complete."

Hideyoshi knew that this had happened in India, in China, and several other parts of the East, and he made up his mind that it should not happen in Japan. So in 1587 he issued an edict ordering every missionary on pain of death to leave Japan within twenty days. This edict was not obeyed, but it caused the missionaries to go about their work more quietly, though they made converts apace.

Nor, for some time, did Hideyoshi pay more attention to the Christians, for he had the greatest war of his warlike career on his hands. He sent troops to assail Korea, and when Korea was overcome he intended to subdue China. The project failed, and the only result of this war was to crush Korea to the earth as a kingdom. Her fields were laid desolate, her cities were burned to the ground, and the country which had taught Japan so much fell into a hopeless, helpless state from which she never fully recovered. In her misery she still continued to teach, for many of her skilled craftsmen were carried across to Japan, where they improved the methods of the native workmen. Most renowned among the craftsmen were the seventeen families of Korean potters whom the Prince of Satsuma brought home from the war and settled in his province. They formed a little guild, who turned out those lovely examples of glazed pottery famous all the world over as Satsuma ware.

Three Great Men—III

CHAPTER XII

THREE GREAT MEN—III

THE war was not ended when Hideyoshi died in 1598, leaving behind him the name of the greatest soldier, and perhaps the greatest man, that Japan has ever produced. Ieyasu succeeded to his authority and at once withdrew the Japanese troops from Korea. Ieyasu was an able general who had served both Nobunaga and Hideyoshi, and he now proceeded to make a deeper impression on the history of his country than either of his masters. For it fell to Ieyasu to put into final and lasting shape the form of feudalism under which Japan was to live until, at a bound, she leapt from the Middle Ages to Modern Times.

Ieyasu belonged to the Tokugawa branch of the great Minamoto family, and the line of Shoguns which he founded thus became known as the Tokugawa Shoguns. This was the last line of Shoguns: it began with Ieyasu in 1603, when the title was conferred on him by the emperor; it ended in 1868, when the Shogunate was struck out of Japanese government.

Ieyasu had to go through the usual struggle before his power was established. There were always plenty of turbulent Daimyos ready to snatch some advantage for themselves upon a change of ruler, and these fierce lords banded against Ieyasu and strove to overthrow him.

The quarrel came to a head in 1600. Two vast



A girl of Tokugawa period

Japan

armies stood face to face near the village of Sekigahara, to the east of Kyoto. The army of the banded chiefs was by far the greater, but it was composed of men from many provinces and led by many leaders. The other army was controlled by one man, and he a master of war. The combat was joined in the morning and raged all day long. Cannon were fired and matchlocks cracked, but the ancient weapons of sword and spear were the arms which decided the day, and the slaughter was tremendous. At evening the enemies of Ieyasu broke and fled, leaving him master of the field and master of Japan. This is one of the decisive battles in Japanese history. It ranks with the great sea-fight between Minamoto and Taira at Dan-no-ura ; like that, it shaped the course of events for centuries.

For now that Ieyasu was firmly fixed in the seat of authority, he set on foot far-reaching measures which were to hold Japan in their grip for two hundred and fifty years. He had broken the power of the rebel Daimyos, and next he stripped many of them of a great part of their possessions and bestowed the land thus gained upon his own kinsmen and followers. In this way he made the Tokugawa family all-powerful in the State, and this formed the foundation of his strength. At the same time he acted in a peaceful and moderate way towards those who were willing to submit, and he took care not to offend the nation by overthrowing great and famous houses, whose roots were struck deeply into the soil. As regarded the Emperor, he paid him the deepest respect, and took care to obtain his consent to the assuming of the title of Shogun.

Up to the time of Ieyasu there had been only one capital in the country, the city of Kyoto. But the new Shogun now set up a capital of his own at Yedo, and henceforth, until recent times, there were two





A WARRIOR BUDDHIST PRIEST. 1881

The Story of the Christian Martyrs

capitals as well as two rulers. The Emperor, or Mikado, and his Court dwelt at Kyoto ; the Shogun, or Tycoon, and his Court dwelt at Yedo.

The rest of Ieyasu's life was spent as a law-maker rather than as a general. He devoted himself to labours which would uplift his people and improve his country. He was not a great scholar but he had a deep respect for letters. In the long ages of unending civil strife, learning had sunk to a low ebb. But now that the land was at peace, scholars and artists and poets began to appear, and Ieyasu became their patron. He had books printed, and he encouraged the Daimyos to open schools where the children of the Samurai could receive a good education as well as instruction in the use of arms. He lived until 1616, and left to his countrymen a code of laws or rules, written in one hundred chapters, and known as the Legacy of Ieyasu, a document which was held in great reverence after his death.

CHAPTER XIII

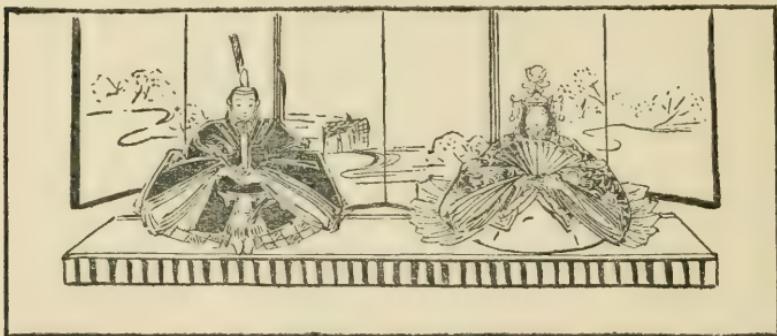
THE STORY OF THE CHRISTIAN MARTYRS

AFTER the death of Hideyoshi the Christians were left in peace for some time. Ieyasu was at first too busy founding his government to pay much attention to them, but it was not likely that he felt very friendly towards them, for a number of Christian Daimyos were among his bitterest enemies. In 1606 he showed his dislike of this new faith by issuing an edict forbidding that any more converts should be made, and that the new teaching must be given up. Little notice, however, was taken of this edict, above all in the Christian city of Nagasaki, where a magnificent

Japan

procession marched through the streets in honour of Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Order of Jesuits.

Ieyasu was angry when he heard of this, and began to act more severely towards the native Christians about his own Court. It is certain that he entertained the idea of his old master Hideyoshi, and believed that the coming of the foreign teachers was a menace to the peace of the empire and the safety of Japan.



Dolls for doll festival

But it was not until 1614 that the storm broke. Ieyasu now made up his mind that the Christian faith should be destroyed in Japan: he issued an edict that all priests should be sent out of the country, that all churches should be pulled down, and that all native Christians should be compelled to renounce their faith. These edicts remained in force and were posted on the public notice-boards until 1868.

A terrible persecution of the Christians was now set on foot. Those who would not give up the faith were hunted down and put to death with the most dreadful cruelty. Rewards were offered to all who should inform against Christians, the rewards rising as high as 300 pieces of silver offered to those who discovered that a Christian, having given up his faith, had returned to it once more.

After the death of Ieyasu, in 1616, the persecutors,

The Story of the Christian Martyrs

urged on by his son, redoubled their fury. One writer says : "We read of Christians being executed in a barbarous manner in the sight of each other, of their being hurled from the tops of precipices, of their being burned alive, of their being torn asunder by oxen, of their being tied up in rice-bags, which were heaped together, and of the pile thus formed being set on fire. Others were tortured before death by the insertion of sharp spikes under the nails of the hands and feet, while some poor wretches, by a refinement of horrid cruelty, were shut up in cages and there left to starve with food before their eyes."

A special body of men was appointed by the Japanese Government for this work of searching out Christians and forcing them to renounce their faith, and year by year the work went steadily on. There was much work to be done, for the heroism of the Japanese martyrs was beyond all praise. They suffered by hundreds and by thousands. They were burned to death, beaten to death by clubs, crucified, and beheaded. If a priest was found hidden in a house the whole family suffered death ; if the parents did not inform against children or children against parents, all went to a common fate. Still the converts clung to the new faith, clung all the closer for the terrible scenes which were enacted before their eyes. They crept by night to the places where the ashes of their friends still smouldered, and sought the charred fragments to preserve as treasured relics. The authorities discovered this, and ordered that the bodies should be completely consumed and the ashes flung into the sea.

The most furious assault of these persecutors was made upon the Christian city of Nagasaki. A Governor was sent there with strict orders to put down the Christians, and he went about the task in a terrible

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manner. The streets of the city were closed at night by gates, and each street was under the charge of a headman who was responsible for those who lived in the houses under his care. In this way, when the gates were closed, each street was in the nature of a prison in which every occupant could be closely examined. Beside the headman of the street, each set of five houses was in the charge of an overseer, who was expected to know the name and business of every person in the houses over which he watched. Thus, between headman and overseer, the Governor could gain full information with regard to a person suspected of being a Christian.

The Governor took the city street by street and house by house, and examined every citizen. Those who were not Christians, or who were willing to give up their faith, he left alone. But the Christians who stood by their faith were handed over at once to the torturers. A favourite method of torture with this Governor was to send his prisoners to a spot where boiling springs bubbled from the earth. Here their backs were slashed open with knife or sword, and the boiling water poured on the raw flesh. But he had other tortures at his command, far more dreadful, and some too horrible to be described, and by means of these he broke the spirit of many people. It is said that in 1626 there were forty thousand Christians in Nagasaki, and in 1627 there was not left one who avowed his faith. The cruel Governor had put to death or terrified into recantation or driven to flight the whole of them, and he gloried in his feat.

But though Nagasaki was swept clear of the faith, the districts around were full of fugitives from the persecution. Before long the officers of the Government were in hot pursuit, and the villages were

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searched and the Christians dragged to the stake or the beheading-ground in great numbers. Yet, as we shall see, the ruin of the Christian church was not complete, and the faith was not entirely destroyed.

A new form of torture now came into use, the "Torment of the Fosse." A martyr was hung in a pit by a rope fastened about the feet. The torture was described as dreadful beyond anything yet known, owing to the pressure of blood upon the brain. A European eye-witness of the persecutions conversed with some who had undergone this torture and, recanting, had been drawn up from the pit and released. They declared to him that "neither the pain caused by burning with fire, nor that caused by any other form of torture, deserves to be compared with the agony produced in this way." It was an agony, too, which was terribly drawn out. The martyrs by fire perished swiftly: in the "Torment of the Fosse" men lived eight or nine days, and one heroic martyr, a young girl, lived fifteen days and then died without making the signal which would have brought her instant release.

Presently there arose that infamous method of trial known as trampling on the Cross. In order to save time in putting questions, the inquisitors placed a crucifix on the ground and ordered that the members of every household should trample upon it. Those who were unwilling to do so were at once seized as Christians. The youngest children were not free from this test. Babies who could not walk were carried by their mothers and their tiny feet were set upon the cross.

This frightful persecution lasted for the greater part of the seventeenth century, until the Japanese authorities were satisfied that the Christian faith had been stamped out of the country. But they were

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wrong. More than two hundred years passed by, and once more Christian teachers made their way into Japan. How great was the surprise and delight of the new-comers when, in 1865, they discovered several Christian communities in the villages around Nagasaki ! These Christians had a few books, but were without priests or teachers of any kind. Yet they had kept their faith alive, generation after generation, handing down certain prayers and the rite of baptism from father to son.

But if Christianity had survived, so had the edicts, and a new one was posted in 1868. It ran thus : "The evil sect called Christian is strictly prohibited. Suspicious persons should be reported to the proper officers, and rewards will be given." At the same time a number of the Christians around Nagasaki were seized and exiled to distant provinces. But the flames of persecution were now no more than a feeble flicker. European Powers protested against this insult to the Christian religion, and after a short time the edicts were withdrawn. In 1872 the native Christians were allowed to return to their homes, and persecution for religious belief was ended for ever in Japan.

CHAPTER XIV

THE FIRST ENGLISHMAN IN JAPAN

THE first Englishman who ever lived in Japan stayed there because he could not get away. English seamen have had many strange experiences, but few of them stranger than the events which befell Will Adams when he sailed for the East in 1598, as chief pilot of a fleet of five Dutch vessels.

Will Adams was a native of Kent, was born in 1574,

The First Englishman in Japan

and apprenticed when he was twelve years old to Nicholas Diggins, a pilot. He became a master of his trade and entered the service of the Dutch East India Company, who despatched a fleet of five sail to the East Indies in 1598, and gave Will Adams the important post of pilot-major. The route followed was by way of the Straits of Magellan, and then across the Pacific. The fleet had a terrible time of it. It met bad weather and enemies: it suffered from fever and scurvy and shortness of rations, and many sailors died. Two of the ships turned back at the Straits and made for home, a third was captured by the Spaniards, and the other two, the *Hope* and the *Charity*, alone started to cross the broad Pacific.

Rough weather was encountered. The *Hope* disappeared and was never more heard of; the *Charity*, of which Will Adams was the pilot, sailed on, but in a desperate condition, for scurvy had reduced her crew until the ship could not be properly handled. Only four on board could stand on their feet: Adams and three others; four more could creep on their hands and knees; the rest were helpless. In this sad state the ship was driven ashore on the island of Kyushu, where the governor of the province in which they landed received them kindly, though most of their goods were plundered by the natives. In a few days some Portuguese came over from Nagasaki, but at that day Portuguese and Dutch were bitter enemies, and, instead of trying to help their fellow-Europeans, the Portuguese told the governor that the refugees were pirates and worthy of death.

The governor sent word to Ieyasu, and the Shogun gave orders that the men and their ship were to be sent to him. The men were sent in boats to Osaka, near Kyoto, where Ieyasu was living, and Adams and another man were taken up to the great castle there

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and appeared before the Shogun. Adams, in his letters, calls the Shogun the emperor, a very easy mistake for him to make when he saw the supreme power of Ieyasu. The Shogun had a long talk with Adams, asking him what brought the Dutch ship there, and why the Portuguese were so bitter against them. Adams explained that the Dutch only wished



Masks for "No" dance

to trade, and that the two nations were enemies at home.

After the interview Adams remained in prison for thirty-nine days, expecting at any moment to be led out to die by crucifixion, since this was the terrible manner in which pirates were put to death. He found afterwards that the Portuguese urged Ieyasu to execute him and his friends, but that the great ruler calmly said that the refugees had done him no harm and he saw no reason to put these men to death because the Portuguese and Dutch were at war with each other.

The *Charity* was brought to a port near Osaka, where Adams was allowed to go on board, and finally to Yedo, where the crew were disbanded, dividing among them a sum of money which Ieyasu had given them to make up for the goods that were stolen. Each man went his own way, except Adams, to whom Ieyasu had taken a fancy. That shrewd and able ruler knew a useful man when he saw him, and he kept Adams about his Court. From his own letters we can see that Will Adams was a simple, straightforward





The First Englishman in Japan

Englishman, honest and capable, and soon Ieyasu became so convinced of his worth that Adams was never allowed to return home. The English sailor felt this exile bitterly. He constantly wished to revisit his native land and rejoin his wife and children whom he had left there. He had nothing to complain of in the way of ill-treatment, save this loss of liberty. The Shogun gave him a handsome property, which Adams describes as “a living like unto a lordship in England, with eighty or ninety husbandmen, that be as my slaves or servants.”

This estate is also spoken of by Captain Cocks, an English adventurer, who visited Adams in 1616. Cocks says: “This is a lordship given to Captain Adams by the old emperor [he meant Ieyasu, who was then dead], to him and his for ever, and confirmed to his son called Joseph. There are above 100 farms or households upon it, besides others under them, all of which are his vassals, and he hath power of life and death over them they being his slaves: and he having an absolute authority over them as any king in Japan hath over his vassals.” Upon this estate Adams lived with a Japanese wife whom he had married, and their graves are shown to this day on a beautiful hill.

What did Adams do for the Shogun? First of all he built ships for him, to Ieyasu’s great delight. Next, he acted as a kind of agent between the Japanese and the foreign traders, who began to appear more frequently on the Japanese coast. Again, Ieyasu would hold long conversations with him, learning all that Adams had to tell him of European affairs. It is believed that he had a house in Yedo, near the Court of the Shogun, for to this day there is a street called An-jin-cho, that is, Pilot Street, and it is said that Adams lived there. He was always spoken of among the Japanese as An-jin-Sama, that is, Mr. Pilot.

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Adams had been nine years among the Japanese when some Dutch vessels appeared off the coast. Ieyasu received them in very friendly fashion and agreed to trade with them. The Portuguese did not like this, but Adams stood by his old friends the Dutch and helped them to gain the favour of the Shogun. Two years later, in 1611, the English found their way to Japan. Adams advised and assisted his countrymen so well that they obtained a charter to trade in any port of the empire, and in his latter years he worked for his fellow-countrymen and helped to extend their trade.

It must have been a comfort to the old pilot to hear the good English speech, for he was never to see his native land again. He died in 1620, and his memory was honoured by the Japanese as the founder of their navy. He became a Shinto divinity and is worshipped under the name of "Angin-Haka," and flowers are still placed on his tomb. He left his estate to be divided between his Japanese and English families, and left in his letters a very interesting picture of the Japan of his day—a Japan which was about to disappear from the sight of Europe and to become a hidden kingdom.

CHAPTER XV

THE HIDDEN KINGDOM

WE now come to a period of Japanese history when the country withdrew from the life of the world, when she shut herself up, neither visiting nor being visited, and retired into the deepest seclusion. The Japanese rulers, as we have seen, had become profoundly uneasy about the foreign traders and teachers

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who had entered their country. Did it mean that in time Japan would be invaded by a foreign army? Such an idea set the heart of a Japanese aflame, for to him the soil of his land was sacred, and his proudest boast was that no invader had ever set foot upon it.

What was to be done? Foreign influence was spreading fast. The Christians had been put down, but European ships sought the shores in increasing numbers, and Iemitsu, the grandson of Ieyasu, took a deep resolution to preserve Japan for the Japanese. He shut up the country. He was the third Shogun of the Tokugawa line, and he used his vast power to completely isolate Japan from the world. He closed every port of the empire save at Nagasaki, where the Dutch were allowed to occupy a tiny island and conduct their trade, but no other European nation was allowed to approach Japan. He forbade the Japanese to travel or trade abroad. They were only permitted to sail along their own shores, and large seaworthy vessels which could carry a crew across the ocean were all broken up. And so for two hundred and fifty years Japan lay hidden from the world.

Other nations moved on, but Japan did not move. She was the Sleeping Beauty among the peoples of the earth. Just as in the old fairy story the castle and its inhabitants slept about the sleeping princess behind the magic brier hedge, so Japan slept behind its veil. And when the veil was rent, the world peeped in and saw a picture of the Middle Ages incarnate, a land where men fought with bows and arrows, with spear and sword, at a time when breech-loaders cracked and rifled cannon thundered over the battle-fields of other countries.

During this age of isolation the feudal system which Ieyasu had planned was maintained in perfect order. It is true, of course, that feudal conditions had

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been present in Japan for centuries before Ieyasu lived, but it fell to the great law-giver to give definite shape to the system, to arrange its ranks, and to give rules for the conduct of each class—rules which were closely observed for centuries.

At the head of the feudal order stood the Daimyos, the nobility. They were not all of equal importance, for some ruled over great provinces and some over small. The measure of each ruler's dignity was the number of koku of rice at which his lands were assessed. A koku is a measure containing about three bushels, and the farmers who tilled the Daimyo's land paid their dues to him in koku. With these payments of rice he supported his state and fed his army of retainers, the Samurai who fought under his banner. A great Daimyo might be worth one million koku of rice per annum, a small one not more than ten to twenty thousand. The value of a koku varied with the rise and fall of prices: at cheapest it sunk to rather more than £1, at dearest it rose to nearly £3.

The Daimyo ruled his province with absolute sway: he owed allegiance to the central government, but there was no interference with him in his management of his province, and before the time of Ieyasu a great feudal lord would often set himself up against the Shogun and give much trouble. He never dared to set himself up against the Emperor, for the Mikado was held in too great reverence. To keep these turbulent nobles in hand, Ieyasu compelled the Daimyos to live at Yedo for six months of the year, and to leave their wives and families there as hostages during the other six months. The Daimyos and their men-at-arms, the Samurai, formed the military class which held itself high above the rest of the population, the common people, who were ranked as follows: farmers, craftsmen, and merchants.

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When a Daimyo travelled he formed the centre of a splendid procession. He rode in state in a kind of palanquin or litter called a *norimono*. It was built of rare woods inlaid in beautiful designs and lacquered until its polished surface glittered like a jewel. A vast train of Samurai attended him armed to the teeth—pikemen, bowmen, and swordsmen—all intent not merely on guarding their master, but watchful to punish all who did not pay proper respect to the great prince. As soon as the train entered a city or village, the streets emptied, and the place became like the abode of the dead. Doors and windows were closed fast, for it was forbidden to the common people even to look upon the passing of a Daimyo. If wayfarers met the train, they at once flung themselves upon their faces and remained prostrate until it had gone by. Woe to one who raised his eyes. He was at once despatched by the fierce Samurai, and his body, carved by their terrible swords, was left at the wayside as a warning to others.

Next below the military class came the farmer, a class held in much respect, as by their labours all were supported. As a rule the taxes claimed from them were not unfair or oppressive, and the farmer took a pride in giving his best rice and presenting it at the collector's storehouse in neat packages of straw. A well-known story is told of Iemitsu, the Shogun who closed the country. He was one day in the field, and when passing a farmer's house sat down to rest upon a bag of rice. The farmer did not know the great man and ordered him angrily to get up at once, saying that the rice was meant for his lord, and he would not permit any one to treat it in so disrespectful a manner as to make a seat of it. The Shogun was so pleased with the poor farmer's loyalty to his master that he gave the man a good post in his service.

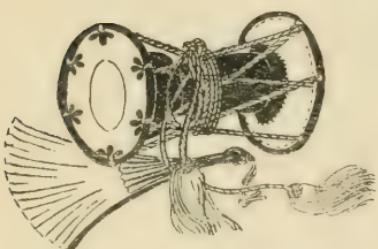
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In feudal times the people lived under laws so strict that the smallest matters of domestic concern were made subject to rigid orders which might not be disobeyed. The most minute rules were drawn up for every class, according to the income of the household. A man of such and such an income was told what kind of house he might live in, what kind of clothes he and his family might wear, what kind of

food they might eat, and even what kind of presents they might give. And if any of those rules were broken, there were plenty of spies to report the matter and get him into trouble.

Take, for instance, the rules to be observed by a farmer whose land yielded 100 koku of rice. He might build a house sixty feet long,

but it must have no parlour and he must not tile the roof. If he feared fire and wished to tile the roof instead of thatching it, he must first obtain permission. When a son or daughter was married only a few gifts might be made, and these gifts are set out in a list ; on the wedding-day none but certain simple viands might be eaten. The farmer and his family must never wear silk clothes. If a son or daughter should marry a person whose station permitted the wearing of silk, the farmer must request that person not to wear silk on the wedding-day. If one of the family should pay a visit, no valuable presents might be taken to the person visited, and at the time of a death or a funeral no wine might be offered to those coming to the house. So the list goes on, dealing with the most trifling affairs of life as well as the greatest, and even forbidding the grandparents to make presents of dolls to the girls and flags to the boys on the occasion of the children's



A Tsuzumi (musical instrument) and fan carried by Court noble

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festivals, but saying that small money presents may be given instead.

The labourer had his set of rules to obey also. His house was to be smaller still, and must be thatched ; nothing else could be thought of. When he made a feast he might offer one dish of food and one soup, but not in cups. His wife might own a sash of silk but she might not wear it in public, which was rather hard on the poor woman. And, above all, the labourer was not to use an umbrella except in case of the direst necessity, as a straw rain-coat was, in the eyes of the lawgiver, amply good enough for him.

With these rules the Government issued a proclamation, explaining their benevolent and friendly intentions towards the people under their charge. The proclamation ran : "These rules are not made to force families of one rank to be equally intimate with all others of the same rank, or to prevent a family from occupying a high rank merely because it is poor ; but because, unless some such rules are laid down, families are very likely unable to live upon their means in the station they would like to occupy, and thus would come to grief. So that these classes have been established, and rules carefully laid down. Still the richer farmers must not be arrogant to the poorer farmers and labourers, and the poorer farmers and the labourers must not hate or dislike the former. The poorer should respect the richer, and the richer should treat the poorer kindly. This is the natural law established by Heaven, and it should be obeyed, not struggled against. The community will then be orderly and peaceful. These rules are established in order that people may be frugal and economical."

It is certain that these rules helped to bring about what the lawgivers wished : they and the force of circumstances made the Japanese a frugal and

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economical race. For hundreds of years the empire was shut up and forced to depend upon itself. All wealth from foreign trade was lacking, eleven-twelfths of the land was bare and sterile mountain, and upon the remaining one-twelfth the teeming millions depended for their entire subsistence.

It followed, then, that the vast masses of the Japa-



Country scene in Tokaido

nese people were in great poverty. They were, but it is the glory of the Japanese feudal system that the poor did not suffer the terrible miseries of the very poor in feudal days in Europe. Here and there were Daimyos who oppressed their subjects, but in the main there was a very kindly feeling between rich and poor, and in times of scarcity the lord gave freely of his stores of grain to his tenants, to be repaid when prosperous harvests should return. This almost universal poverty has caused the poor to be considered in a hundred ways by the brotherly Japanese. In Old Japan it was almost impossible to turn a poor man out of his house or a distressed tenant out of his farm. If misfortune happened to him, the law provided that his rent should be reduced until times were better, and in any conflict between the interests of a rich man and a poor man it was clearly laid down by the lawgivers that the full benefit of the doubt should be given to the poorer party.

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This spirit remains strongly in evidence at the present day. As a recent writer remarks: "In the West poverty entails upon its victims the necessity of paying the highest prices for food and fuel. Coal bought by the basket makes the price per ton excessive. In Japan the buying in small quantities is to a certain extent regarded as evidence of lack of means, and therefore the purchaser is entitled to receive the utmost consideration and the largest possible discount. Asking the price of a certain article, a figure was named to me. 'How much by the dozen?' I then inquired; instantly the price was greatly advanced. My question was plain evidence of superior ability to pay, and the tax was therefore levied. It was no extortion. In Japanese eyes their system is simply a fair mode of taxation. The rich pay the high prices that the goods may be offered to the poor at the lowest possible rates."

CHAPTER XVI

THE HIDDEN KINGDOM (*continued*)

THE next class below the farmers was that of the craftsmen. A craftsman was a very useful person and highly regarded, but he was not so necessary as the farmer, upon whom all depended for daily food, and so the farmer took the higher rank. During the period of seclusion the art of the Japanese craftsman was carried to a wonderful pitch. Some of the Tokugawa Shoguns were men of great culture, and at their Courts they gave encouragement to poets, painters and armourers, metal-workers, makers of porcelain, swordsmiths, and carvers in wood and stone. The porcelain and swords, the lacquer and the work wrought

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in gold, silver, and bronze, are the delight of judges who examine them at the present day and the despair of the workers who try to equal them.

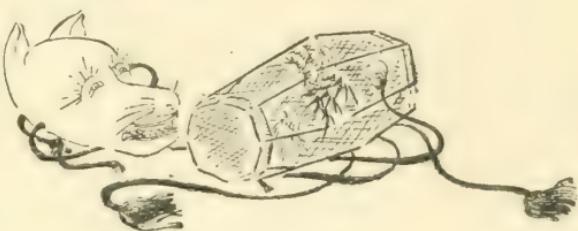
Many of the Daimyos were also patrons of great craftsmen, and each lord had his own band of workers who turned out all that was needed for the dress and adornment of the Daimyo and his palace. There was no question of buying and selling in the matter. The craftsman was supported by his lord, and was often a member of the household. He was in no haste to complete his work, for he could take what time he pleased. So he leisurely and lovingly spent his labour upon some miracle of his craft which slowly grew under his hands, a marvellous piece of armour or a lacquered bowl, upon which very possibly he had spent years of patient toil and marvellous skill.

The trading class came last among the people, for in Old Japan trade and commerce were looked down upon. "As far back as history carries us, contempt for the mere business of money-making was a prominent characteristic of the Japanese people. There is hardly a tale of any length which does not furnish facts proving this. The merchant, the usurer, the middlemen were regarded as the dregs of ancient Japanese society, to the level of whose life the noble Samurai would rather die than descend."

Before the time of seclusion Japanese traders and merchants had begun to move abroad, and their junks were known on the coasts of neighbouring countries. But when the empire was shut up, all this movement ceased. The sea-going junks were destroyed, and the clumsy, cumbrous vessels which were all the Shoguns would allow, crept along the shore much as crabs crept on the shore. A voyage of a few hundred miles from one port to another often took a whole year.

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The traders of Old Japan were formed into guilds, and there were guilds controlling those who dealt in various goods and those engaged in various occupations. There were guilds of bath-house-keepers, peddlers, sellers of silk, cotton, ironware, cloth, and so on. These guilds became very powerful as time went on, and used their power to fix prices and control trade. The people became very dissatisfied, for they accused the guilds of keeping prices up when things were so plentiful that prices should have been low, and about 1841 the guilds were abolished.



Toys

Soon it was found that things were worse than before. The guilds had certainly fleeced the people, but they had also protected them in maintaining rules of commercial honour, and placing each branch of trade on the firm footing which a strong community of merchants could give. Now that each trader was left to do as he pleased and had no fear of the headmen of the guilds before his eyes, customers found themselves out of the frying-pan into the fire. So the guilds were set up again in 1851, but their power to oppress the purchasers of the goods was taken from them by certain restrictions.

There was another class of Old Japan which we must mention, a class in many ways of deep interest. It was not numbered with the people, for the people would have deemed it the greatest insult if the class had been considered as a part of the nation. This was the Eta class, the pariahs, the outcasts of Japan. The Etas were not allowed to live near other people, for

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the poorest coolies considered their mere presence to be an insult, and the Eta who dared to enter a tea-house would be swiftly driven out with blows and revilements.

The members of this outcast and degraded class were compelled to herd together in their own villages, and their very existence was ignored. They were not counted among the inhabitants of the district but were numbered with the cattle, and any highway which passed by their abodes was left out of all road measurements. The spot where an Eta had stood was polluted, and must be sprinkled with salt before a Japanese could set foot on it without defiling himself. No Japanese would ever allow for an instant that an Eta belonged to the same race as himself. If one offended him and he slew the offender, he thought no more of it than if he had killed a dog.

Whence came this strange outcast race whom the Japanese, as a rule so kind and tolerant, treated with such bitter cruelty, and looked upon with so unutterable a disdain? No one knows, for their origin lies so far back in the history of Japan that the reason for this violent hatred has been forgotten, but many opinions are put forward. Some say they are the descendants of Korean captives brought to Japan during the Korean wars. Others say that the Etas spring from Tartar captives taken at the time when Kublai Khan sent his Great Armada against Japan, and that the deep hatred borne towards them springs from the fury felt at that time against the invaders. But other thinkers put the origin of the Etas back to a much more distant date, to the introduction of Buddhism in the seventh and eighth centuries. The Buddhist priests taught that those who took life were to be looked upon with horror and disdain, so that the class which killed and skinned animals, put criminals

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to death, and performed the like degrading tasks, gradually became a class apart and was looked upon as a polluted race, hated and abhorred.

In Old Japan the lowest and most despised occupations were reserved for the Etas. It was their duty to kill and flay animals, to crucify criminals and transfix them with spears after they were bound to the cross, and finally bury the bodies. Many were tanners and shoemakers, and in their own villages they were ruled by their headmen. The Chief of the Etas lived at Yedo and, according to their tradition, was a descendant of the great ruler Yoritomo. He was permitted the privilege of wearing two swords.

It was not uncommon in Old Japan for an Eta to travel to a distant part and, hiding his origin, try to obtain work as a labourer and live among the people. It was a dangerous task, for if discovered he was put to death at once, and it was no easy thing to hide the marks of his race. Centuries of oppression and ill-treatment had given the Eta a peculiar and distinctive look, and his secret was often discovered.

In the year 1871 the Etas were placed beside the other people of the realm in the eyes of the law. It was also ordained that they should receive education. But for a long time the people were unwilling to have anything to do with these poor outcasts, and it fell to the gentry to lead the way in the accepting of Etas as citizens. In one village a school was needed, and some men found the money to build the school and pay a schoolmaster. But on the day of opening not a child was there. The men who had founded the school were Etas, and the Japanese would not send their children. But there was one scholar there, after all. This was no other than the Governor of the district, a Samurai gentleman. He had foreseen what would happen, so he went to the school, entered his

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name as a pupil, and the night before the school opened actually slept at the house of one of the Etas. The people were filled with surprise and wonder. But when they saw that he was willing to be a friend to this new class of citizens, a change of feeling took place and the school prospered.

CHAPTER XVII

THE OPENING OF JAPAN

FOR more than two hundred and fifty years Emperor followed Emperor and Shogun followed Shogun, and Japan still lived in the Feudal age, although the other nations were alive and bustling under modern conditions. At last the world began to knock at her door and demand that her isolation should be given up, that she should come from her seclusion and take her part in the world's work. The first step was taken by the United States. In 1853 Commodore Perry, with a small American fleet, arrived in Yedo Bay and delivered a letter from the American President to the Emperor of Japan inviting the Japanese to open their country, and permit foreign traders to enter. He delivered his letter and sailed away, promising to return for an answer in the following year.

He came back in 1854, and the Japanese agreed to open certain ports to the Americans and to deal with them on a friendly footing. At once there was a rush of the other nations to secure the same privileges, and Great Britain concluded a similar treaty in the same year.

From that moment a very troubled time arose in Japan. The Daimyos and the Samurai became ranged in two parties: one party, singing fierce war-songs

The Opening of Japan

against the “black ships,” as they called the foreign vessels, wished to drive the “barbarians” out of Japan ; the other party, seeing more clearly the great strength of foreign Powers, was unwilling to offer a vain resistance, and urged that the country should be opened. The former party gathered round the Court at Kyoto, the Emperor’s Court, the latter party about the Court of the Shogun, or Tycoon, at Yedo. But in spite of all efforts of the anti-foreign party, the foreign Powers steadily pushed their way into the country, and within a few years there were several foreign legations established in the city of Yedo.

The foreign representatives soon found that they were exposed to terrible dangers. The Samurai, who hated the “barbarians,” would lie in wait for them as they moved about the city, and cut them down with the sword. A series of terrible outrages happened, and the Japanese Government was at its wits’ end to know what to do. To threaten the punishment of death was useless, for the murderer was perfectly ready to die, nay, rejoiced to die, thinking that he had done a service to his beloved country. Nor could their lords be made responsible, for each man took care to leave the service of his lord and become a Ronin before he undertook the deed. The word Ronin means “wave-man,” and was applied to a Samurai who, having no master, was looked upon as having no fixed place in the world, but as one tossed hither and thither like a wave of the sea. Some Ronins did not wait to be seized, but, having struck down a “barbarian,” quietly committed *hara-kiri*, and died with a paper fastened to their clothes giving a complete account of themselves and why they had attempted the deed of blood.

Little by little a strong feeling grew up against the Shogun. Men began to look back into history and ask

Japan

whence he came, and why he had this great power in the country. They argued that the Emperor was the supreme authority, and yet here was a subject who ruled in his name, and enjoyed all the power while the Emperor lived at Kyoto in a palace which was no more nor less than a gilded prison. This feeling grew, and it was strengthened by the great unrest in the land—an unrest which the government of the Shogun could not control. Great Daimyos attacked foreign vessels on their own account, and were severely punished ; the clans fought together, and amid this war of factions Kyoto was almost destroyed by fire ; great officials were murdered by the Samurai of their foes, and there were plots and counterplots in all directions.

The root of the trouble lay in the divided authority within the realm, and in 1867 a wise old Daimyo pointed this out in a frank letter to the Shogun. He wrote : “The cause of our trouble lies in the fact that the administration proceeds from two centres, causing the empire’s eyes and ears to be turned in two different directions. The march of events has brought about a revolution, and the old system can no longer be persevered in. You should restore the governing power into the hands of the sovereign, and so lay a foundation on which Japan may take its stand as the equal of other countries.”

In their desire for a settled government the minds of the Japanese turned to the Emperor, and the year 1868 became the Year of Restoration. The Shogunate was abolished and the Emperor became sole and supreme ruler. The Shogun, the last of the Tokugawa line, submitted to the decree, but there was some fighting between the Imperial troops and his followers ; in the end the latter were put down. The Court of the Emperor was now moved to Yedo, where the

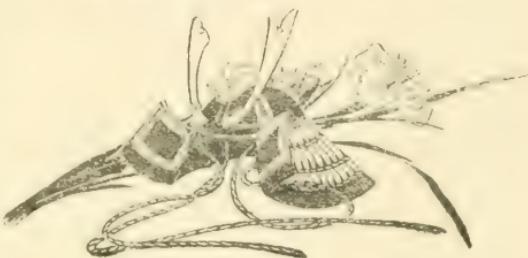
The Opening of Japan

Shogun had ruled, but the name of the city was changed to Tokio, a name which it still bears.

It was thus the “anti-foreign” party which triumphed, and many of them hoped to see the Emperor issue a decree ordering the expulsion of the hated barbarian; but they had a rude awakening from their dream. They had been supported by the great warrior clans of Satsuma and Choshu, because the latter hated the Shogun. But these shrewd Samurai knew that it was useless to attempt to check the flowing tide: they now declared for the opening of the country and the movement towards modern conditions.

We now come to the most striking event in the modern history of Japan, and, indeed, one of the most striking events in all history. The clans saw that their feudal system was out of place in modern life. What did they do? The great military caste calmly stepped down from its lofty position, gave up its land and its wealth to the Emperor, and took its stand among the mass of the people, having no thought save for the good of the new Japan. In other lands the feudal system broke up in war and fierce strife. Battlefields were drenched in blood, and smiling provinces became naked deserts before the power of great barons could be broken, and their wide fiefs torn from their grip. But in Japan the princes gave up their might not only without a murmur, but of their own free will.

In 1869 a number of the chief Daimyos addressed a memorial to the Emperor, offering him their possessions. Here are a few ringing sentences from this



Kabuto (helmet)

Japan

noble document: "The place where we live is the Emperor's land, and the food which we eat is grown by the Emperor's men. How can we make it our own? We now reverently offer up the lists of our possessions and men with the prayer that the Emperor will take good measures for rewarding those to whom reward is due and taking from those to whom punishment is due. Let the imperial orders be issued for altering and reshaping the territories of the various classes. This is now the most urgent duty of the Emperor, as it is that of his servants and children."

This example was followed by the other Daimyos, and thus, at a single stroke, the whole feudal system which had lasted in supreme power from the days of Yoritomo was cut away. The Daimyos received one-tenth of their former revenues, but no longer had the Samurai to support. The latter class received pensions from the Government, and they, with their wives and children, formed a body numbering about two millions. After a time the Government gave each Samurai a lump sum equal to several years of his pension money and paid him off finally. Many of the Samurai now fell into great poverty. The lump sum was soon disposed of, and they had been trained to despise labour and trade. But never a murmur was heard from them. They accepted poverty and want as calmly as they had accepted hardship in the service of their lord. Many of them became policemen, and the police are still largely drawn from the Samurai class. Many, strange to say, entered domestic service, for they looked upon this as the most honourable form of labour. They had been used to serve in the household of their master, so they found it easy to serve others.

Modern Japan

CHAPTER XVIII

MODERN JAPAN

By the year 1871 Japan had fully entered upon the march towards her goal, that of transforming her people into a modern nation, abreast of modern ideas, equipped with modern appliances, fit to take her place in the front rank of the Great Powers of the world. Her progress was marvellous and her success complete. She sent out bands of earnest students to other lands, bidding them perfect themselves in the secrets of government, of manufacture, of naval and military training, and then return to instruct their fellow-Japanese. She invited foreign experts to make their homes in Japan and teach her people. From the first the English-speaking peoples had been her model, and her ambition is to become the "Britain of the East," a great naval and trading Power.

In 1871 posts and telegraphs were introduced, and in 1872 railways, and then in poured a whole flood of Western institutions and ways of government. In fact, the pace became too swift for many Japanese of the old school and, strangely enough, the Satsuma clan, which had done so much to open the land, was the first to cry halt! In 1877 they rose against the Government and decided for a return to the old feudal ways, and their chief led a powerful army of well-trained Samurai upon the capital. The war which followed was notable as giving the first hint of the power which slumbered among the common people of Japan. The Government army was composed of levies drawn from the people, and these matched

Japan

themselves against the Samurai and won the day. The Satsuma rebellion was crushed, and it was seen that the farmer and the coolie could fight as well as the military men who had ruled them.

In 1884 English was introduced into the schools, and in 1889 the absolute rule of the Emperor was given up and a Constitution was granted, by means of which the people could take a share in the government. Houses of Parliament were set up, the people elected members to represent them, and laws, instead of being made at the will of the Emperor, had to be passed through Parliament.

In 1894 war broke out between Japan and China. All the world looked on to see what the Japanese army would do. A great deal had been heard of the brave and well-drilled Japanese soldiery, and now here was a chance to see what they were worth. But they were not severely tried, for the Chinese as a rule made haste to run away. Within a short time China was soundly beaten, and was forced to yield a large province and pay a heavy sum of money. But Japan was robbed of the fruits of her victory. Russia, Germany, and France stepped in and forbade the taking over of the Chinese province, and Japan had to be content with the island of Formosa.

The Japanese felt very angry about this, but they were not strong enough to stand against these three Great Powers, so they bided their time and kept on working. Day by day they trained their soldiers and sailors for a great struggle which they could see looming ahead, a struggle which would either destroy them or give them the place for which they longed, the position of the Great Power of the East. They had marked Russia as their most dangerous foe, and Japan rose as one man when war was declared with Russia.

Modern Japan

The whole land flung itself into the fray, and the old Samurai spirit was shown by every class, high and low. Those who went to the front were the envy of every man left in Japan ; those who were left at home worked—men, women, and children—for the national cause. Russia entered into the strife rather with a feeling of contempt, as if it were beneath the dignity of her vast empire to struggle with the little group of islands near her eastern coasts. But in a short time the Giant of the North was reeling under the crushing blows dealt by the brave islanders. By land and sea Russia was smitten in a terrible fashion. Her armies were dashed to pieces, and her ships were captured or sunk beneath the waves. Two chief events stand out before all others in this great war : the capture of Port Arthur and the naval battle in the Korean Strait.

Port Arthur is a seaport in that province of China which Japan was not allowed to take after the war of 1894. It had fallen into the hands of Russia, and the Japanese were doubly angry to see it in the hands of the nation which had chiefly prevented them from seizing it. So that when war broke out, the Japanese attacked the Russian garrison in Port Arthur with the utmost fury. The fighting before Port Arthur showed how Yamato Damashii, the Spirit of Old Japan, still filled the heart of the nation. The Russians fought splendidly, but the heroic islanders were not to be denied. They stormed the trenches and filled them with their dead, in order that the rear ranks might climb over their comrades' bodies to reach the parapets. Regiments were ordered on forlorn hopes where not a man could escape, and they went joyfully, counting it an honour to die for their Emperor. It was hopeless to contend with such burning valour, and Port Arthur fell on January 1, 1905.

Japan

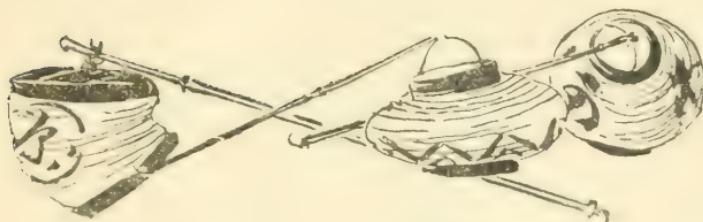
In May of the same year came the mighty naval victory which raised Japan to the pinnacle she longed to gain, that of a great sea Power. For many months the Japanese fleet had been waiting for the Russian fleet, which had set out from Cronstadt in October 1904. The Russian fleet was unlucky from the beginning. It had scarcely left Russia when it was seized with panic and committed a terrible blunder. When crossing the North Sea it actually thought that some English fishing-boats, quietly at work on the Dogger Bank, were Japanese torpedo-boats, and fired upon them, sinking a vessel and killing or wounding several English fishermen. There was an inquiry, and the Russians were compelled to apologise and pay compensation. But this fleet proved to be in no hurry to face the Japanese warships. It dawdled very slowly along, staying for weeks at a time here and there in friendly waters, and did not gain the Sea of Japan until May 1905. Here Admiral Togo pounced upon it and almost utterly destroyed it. Well might he be called the Nelson of Japan. He had been trained in an English school, and most of his ships had been built in British yards, and his sailors fought like British tars. At a blow Russia was stripped of her fleet and was helpless on the sea.

At this point the American President, Mr. Roosevelt, stepped in, and, through his good offices, peace was made. Japan took Port Arthur for her own, freed Korea from Russian influence, and gained the southern half of the large island of Saghalien. The latter territory had formerly belonged to Japan, but had been held by Russia after 1878.

Since the war Korea has fallen entirely into the hands of the Japanese, and Japan has stepped into the foremost rank of the Great Powers. She has entered into

Modern Japan

an alliance with Great Britain, but this alliance has no menace for any other country: it simply means that the two island kingdoms stand shoulder to shoulder in the interests of the world's peace, for without peace trade and commerce cannot flourish, and they are the life-blood of these allied nations.



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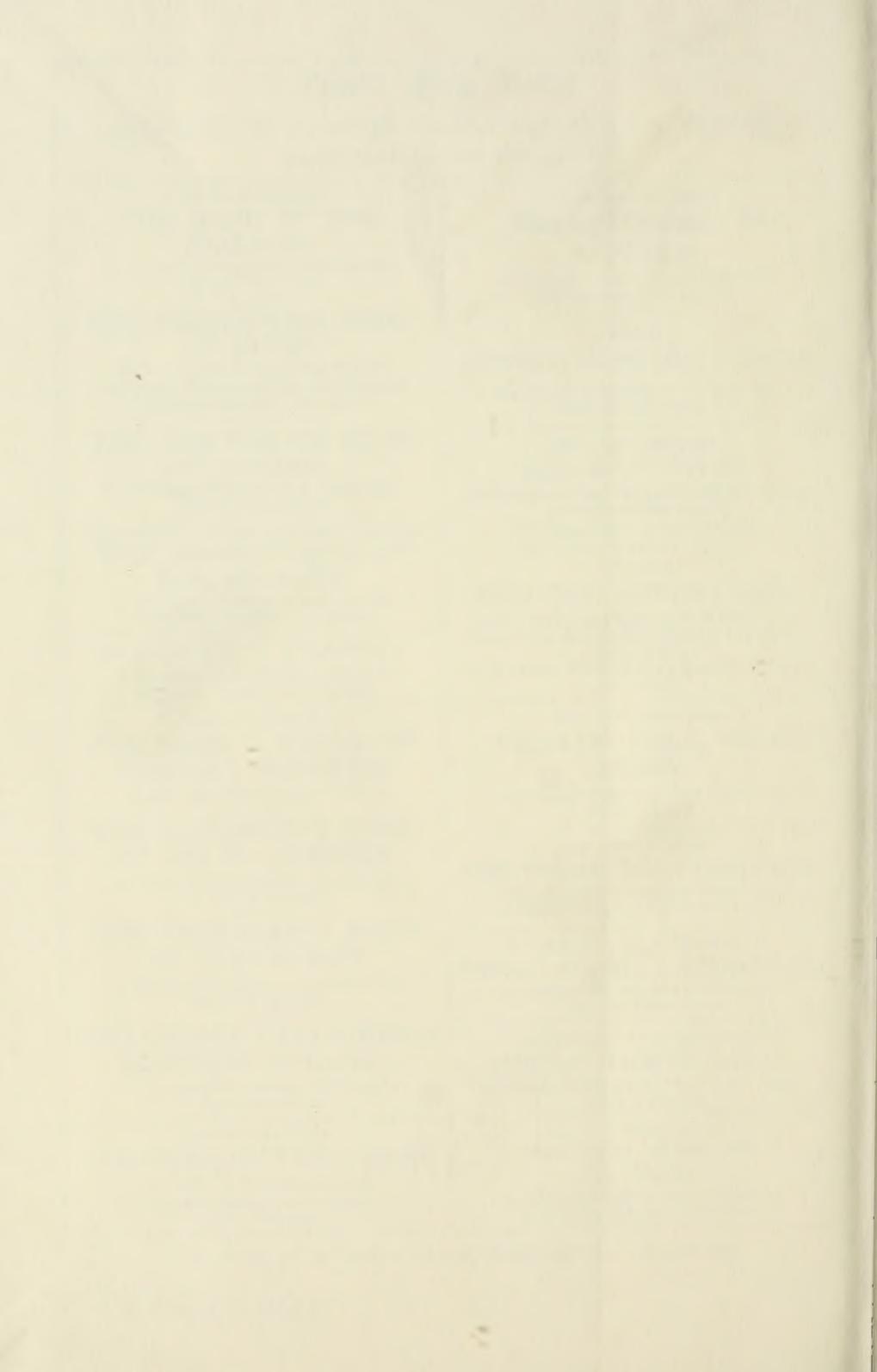
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